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MARY ANDERSON







From the page Sketch for the Portrait by G. F. Watts. R.A.

A FEW MEMORIES

BY

MARY ANDERSON

(MME. DE NAVARRO)

WITH PORTRAITS



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A FEW MEMORIES

PORTRAITS OF THE AUTHOR

From the large Sketch for the Portrait by G. F. Watts, R.A.	<i>Frontispiece</i>
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TO
MY HUSBAND



A FEW MEMORIES

CHAPTER I



WILL not plead the apology for publishing these few recollections, that friends—I might add, strangers—have urged me to do so. That excuse is worn threadbare, and it would not be true to say that it is that which has induced me, after five happy years of married life and retirement, to write this short memoir. I have, as I am well aware, no literary skill, and assuredly do not wish for further publicity. I am content to be forgotten, except by such friends as I hope will always keep a place for me in their hearts. But it seems to me reasonable to believe that my experience may be of some service to those who have, or think they have, an aptitude for acting. I have written these pages more for young girls (who may have the same ambitions that I had) than for any one else: to show them that the glitter of the stage is not all gold, and thus to do a little towards making them realize how serious an undertaking it is to adopt a life so full of hardships, humiliations, and even dangers.

I have omitted from this volume numerous interesting

examples and incidents, as the mention of them would necessarily embrace the names of men and women who (I am happy to say) still grace the world.


* * * * *

The second child of a large family, my mother was brought up according to the most rigorous of German principles. Her thoughts were hardly her own; her literature was set before her, and consisted of the "Lives of the Saints" and other pious books, while plays, dances, and the amusements generally permitted to the young were strictly forbidden, and practically unknown to her. My excellent grandparents, though Catholics, had been educated to believe that the natural tendencies of the theatre were "downward and pernicious," and their children in turn were not allowed even to think of entering such a place. However, by the aid of her eldest and favorite brother, his pardonable dissimulation, and a friendly latch-key, my mother was, at the age of seventeen, smuggled into one of those "dens of iniquity" for the first time. She was carried away by the talent and great beauty of Mrs. D. P. Bowers, and by the charm surrounding that interesting though sensational and old-fashioned play, "The Sea of Ice." It was probably

this breath of romance that caused her to grow more and more restive under the strict discipline of her home life. At any rate, it was soon after her first visit to the theatre that she found a way of meeting and losing her heart to Charles H. Anderson, a young man of English birth, who had just finished his education at Oxford. Clever, scholarly, charming in presence and manner, devoted to sport, a passionate lover of the drama and all things artistic, he was the very man to win the admiration of a girl whose life had been as narrow and fettered as hers. With all his graces and accomplishments, he was, unfortunately, not religious, and his proposal for my mother's hand was met by a stern refusal from her parents. They did not believe in marriages between persons of different religions, and especially were they opposed to the marriage of their daughter with a man devoid of faith. To them the soul union was the only one that could insure a lasting love and durable happiness. My mother was therefore forbidden to see him again, though from a worldly point of view her lover had everything in his favor. For some months a secret correspondence was carried on between them. Wearying, however, of continued separation, and aided again by the favorite brother,

they eloped, and were clandestinely married. The young couple, after a year's sojourn in New York and Philadelphia, wended their way westward. This was in 1859, only a few weeks before my birth. While in mid-ocean, bound for California, their ship caught fire. Providentially, there was no wind, or the vessel, and probably every soul on board, would have perished. My mother displayed remarkable courage on that occasion. While every one rushed about the deck, panic-stricken, she stood leaning against a mast, calmly awaiting the inevitable. Fortunately the fire was mastered, and but little damage done. The ship continued her trip safely, landing her passengers at — a few days later. My parents went at once to Sacramento, where, on the 28th of July, I first saw the light; my birthplace a quaint hotel, surmounted by a huge golden eagle, from which it took its name. My mother, scarcely nineteen, and still child enough to be pleased with only pretty people and things, was greatly distressed on first seeing my ugly, red little face; and the nurse's consoling and conventional remark, "Never you mind, ma'am; you may be proud of her some day," was met with a hopeless "Never!" However, before a month had passed, she, in the way of mothers,

thought there never had been such a "dear little girl." I have been told that, from my earliest days, I have always been naturally gay, preferring even, when quite tiny, to laugh rather than cry. This disposition has, through life, been a very great blessing, for it has continually enabled me to find enjoyment in the smallest things. I was still a baby when, during the absence of her husband in England, my mother was suddenly awakened one night by a bright light thrown on her face and a gruff voice saying: "Come, come, ma'am, you've got gold in this yere house, and unless you fork it out I'll do away with yur young un." Hereupon he turned his lantern on a second ruffian, of whose presence my mother was unaware until she saw him holding me in one hand, while with the other he brandished a dangerous-looking knife. "See 'ere," said this one in a whisper, "I'm desperate, I am; fork it out, or I'll run your lambkin through!" All unconscious of the death that was threatening me, I kept crowing merrily, and trying to catch at the rough fellow's shaggy beard. My mother remained silent for a moment, thinking that their hearts would surely be softened by the blandishments of her little one; but seeing that these had no effect, and that the knife was



painfully close to me, she promised hurriedly to give the men all she had, only begging that they would return the child to her at once. The result was that they took away all the money in the house—a considerable sum—several gold and silver ornaments, and the only portrait of my father in existence, a miniature which they coveted for the diamonds surrounding it. Had my mother lost her presence of mind, or, womanlike, indulged in the usual scream, there would doubtless have been, then and there, an end to all my earthly joys and sorrows; but she was, and always has been, remarkably cool and collected in times of real danger—more so than many men. The robbers evidently admired her pluck, for they gave her a polite “Good - night, ma’am,” as, heavily laden, they made their exit from the window.

We left Sacramento when I was still a child in arms, my mother wishing to be near her uncle, who was pastor of a small German congregation near Louisville, Kentucky. Her parents had not forgiven her for marrying against their wishes, and she felt the need of a friend during the frequent absences of my father in England. We took up our abode in Louisville in 1860. As this uncle became our guardian after my father's


early death, and was like a second father to us, it will not be amiss to give a short sketch of him here. He was of German birth. After finishing his education at Heidelberg, his uncle and guardian sent him to Rome to study for the priesthood. He chose the order of the Black Franciscans, and after a ten years' residence in Rome settled in the United States. He was first sent to a wild part of Texas, where he had many exciting encounters with "noble Redmen of the forest," and where he found exceptional opportunities for indulging his taste for hunting and shooting. He was called away from this interesting State after a few years, by order of the Provincial, to become the Herr Pastor of a small German settlement in New California, situated just outside of Louisville. Here "Pater Anton," as he was called, very soon became a great favorite. On his feast-day it was delightful to see his congregation, in their "Sunday clothes," bringing their children for his blessing, the little creatures in bright-colored German frocks, laden with flowers, fruits, eggs, home-knitted socks, cotton handkerchiefs of the brightest red and yellow, cooing pigeons, cackling ducks, chickens, while an invincible pig or two (from the richer parishioners)

joined in the general chorus of holiday-makers. Pater Anton was the gayest of them all, for though a man of great learning, an accomplished linguist, a fine musician, and an eloquent preacher, he was the simplest of his simple flock. His appearance was so striking that passers-by turned to look at him in the street. He was tall, with an habitual stoop. His features were finely chiselled, and his straight black hair, worn long, was cut like Liszt's. He had the most beautiful mouth and teeth I have ever seen, the sweetest smile, and the heartiest laugh in the world. My mother could not have chosen a better friend for herself or for her children. His tender love for the young was proverbial. He was often known to leave the most important visitor to attend to the wants of some little one who happened to come into his presence.

"Dans nos souvenirs la mort touche la naissance." My father died when I was but three years of age, and within a few months of the birth of my brother. He died at Mobile at the age of twenty-four, in the full flush of his youth, "extinguished, not decayed." I remember nothing of his voice, look, or manner; nor have we any portrait of him now remaining.

Pater Anton ("Nonie," as I called him, "uncle" being an impossible word for me then) often came to cheer our little family. I can see him still, on his fat, old, lazy horse, trotting up the street, his long hair waving in the wind, his face shining with pleasure, his rusty coat shining also (with age, for he thought it worldly to have more than one new coat in eight years), while from his large pockets dolls, trumpets, jumping-jacks, and other ravishing toys stuck out in every direction. What a picture he was of kindness and child-like gayety, and how we hailed him with cries of joy and clapping of hands!

In looking back over the long procession of remembered events of those early years, I can still see myself playing one morning in the nursery with my mother and brother, when Lou, a devoted German maid, suddenly appeared before us with blanched face, saying to my mother, in frightened tones, that there were a number of "bluecoats" (Northern soldiers, as distinguished from the Southern "graycoats") below, who insisted upon seeing her. I went with her to the parlor, clinging to her dress. Never having seen any but little tin soldiers before, I was terrified by these great men with bayonets and clanking swords. One of




them said, "The North has conquered, the South has been badly beaten" (my mother gave a cry, for all her sympathies were with the South); "you will have to illuminate your house to-night in honor of our triumph, and as a sign of rejoicing that the war is at an end." Gaining her composure quickly, my mother answered, "But you cannot ask me to rejoice in what I so deeply regret! What if I refuse?" (A murmur of applause from Lou, peeping through the door.) "If you refuse, madam, we shall be obliged to throw you into prison as a rebel. Not only must every house be illuminated in this town to-night, but in every other Southern city as well. These are my orders. Good-day to you!" "Schwartzte Teufel!" from Lou, and a shake of her fist at their retreating forms. Though tears were shed, candles were lighted in every window. My delight in thinking it was Christmas on seeing so many burning tapers was marred only by my mother's sad white face and Lou's angry red one, which told me something must be very wrong. The streets were alive with "bluecoats" and ablaze with lights. Drums were beating, cannon firing over the triumph of the North, and all this in a city whose bravest sons had fought and died in the

Southern cause. There was a choky, terrible feeling in the air, which caused me to sleep with my head under the coverlet for several nights.

Soon after this my brother and I were allowed to go to New California to visit Nonie. The bright little town, with its houses painted blue, red, pink, and white, with meadows and pastures intersecting them, looked more like a toy town than a "real live one." Now, alas! all the quaint prettiness has vanished: large factories, ugly breweries, and brick-yards disfigure it. The church, the priest's house, and the school of the old time alone remain. We always spent the great feast-days there. Especially do I remember Corpus Christi. On that day the pasture near the church seemed, to my childish eyes, like an enchanted scene. Many altars were erected there, covered with lace, flowers, and lighted candles. The village band played festal music, and was answered by the distant notes of the organ and choir from the little church. Three times the beautiful procession filed around the pasture. Preceded by small girls in white, scattering rose-leaves, and acolytes swinging their silver censers, came Pater Anton carrying the monstrance. Kneeling in the grass, we sent up fervent prayers, the warm summer sun shining

like a benediction over all. What golden days those were, filled only with holiness, simplicity, and peace! Another well-remembered day was when I was first allowed to polish the church silver, and then to deck Our Lady's altar. After that Nonie began to teach me the organ. He wished to train my brother and me for the lives he and my mother had mapped out for us. My brother was to study medicine and help him generally (Nonie was an excellent physician, and could soothe the bodily as well as the spiritual ills of his flock), while I was destined to care for his small household, tend the parish poor, train the choir, and play the organ on Sundays and holidays. But man proposes and God disposes. About that time, after remaining a widow for five years, my mother was married to Dr. Hamilton Griffin, of Louisville. A surgeon and major in the Southern army, he had gone through the entire war, having been wounded severely on two occasions. He was full of reminiscences of Sherman and Grant—to whom, in after-years, he introduced me—and knew personally Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee. He admired both enthusiastically. General Lee, he often said, was the most courteous gentleman, as well as the most brilliant soldier, he had ever met.

I was then eight years old, and it was thought necessary to begin my general education. They took me to the Convent of the Ursulines, near Louisville, and left me there. Who that has ever suffered it can forget the first great homesickness? I remember distinctly my utter misery when the grated door closed upon the mother and brother from whom I had never before been separated. The convent was a large, Italian-looking building, surrounded by gardens, and shut in by high, prison-like walls. That first night in the long dormitory, with its rows of white beds and their little occupants, some as sad as myself, my grief seemed more than I could bear. The moon made a track of light across the floor. A strain of soft music came in at the open window; it was only an accordion, played by some one sitting outside the convent wall; but how sweet and soothing it was! The simple little melody seemed to say: "See what a friend I can be! I am Music, sent from heaven to cheer and console. Love me, and I will soothe and calm your heart when it is sad, and double all your joys." It kept saying such sweet things to me that soon I fell asleep, and dreamed I was at home again. From that night I felt music a panacea for all my childhood's sorrows. Even



the street-organs gave me pleasure. I mean the soft, old-fashioned organs, not the modern "barrel," that sounds as though a show-pupil of a boarding-school were torturing the keys of a poor piano.

Owing to an indolent nature, and an impatient dislike for the beginnings of things, I learned little besides music and a smattering of German, which was promptly forgotten. Thinking only of amusement, I had, with wicked forethought, begged my indulgent mother to provide my school uniform with spacious pockets. These were secretly filled with wee china dolls, bits of stuff, and sewing implements, with which I made entire trousseaux for the charming dollies during the study hours, and, when the unsuspicious nun was not looking, kept the girls in a constant titter by dancing them upon my desk as each new dress was donned. Our convent uniform consisted of a plain blue cashmere skirt and bodice, and a large straw scoop-bonnet, with a curtain at the back. In this most unpicturesque costume we were marched to church on Sunday—two and two—where my enthusiastic singing of the litany generally put the others out, and where, to the horror of the nuns, in my haste to leave the church, I invariably genuflected with my back to the altar. The first year went by quite

uneventfully until the end of the term, which was celebrated, as usual, by an "exhibition," as they called the songs and recitations given by the children. An *exhibition* it was! The nuns, knowing that my mother would dress me tastefully for the occasion, put me in the front row of the opening chorus—an appropriate one, for it began with:

"My grandfather had some very fine geese,
Some very fine geese had he,
With a quack quack here, and a quack quack there,
And here a quack, there quack, here, there quack—
Oh, come along, girls, to the merry green fields,
To the merry green fields so gay!"

This artistically poetic and musical gem contained verses enough to name all the animals possessed by that unfortunate grandfather. The long rehearsals over, the all-important afternoon arrived. I dare say that even at La Scala, on a first night, there never had been more flutter and nervous excitement than on our little stage. The house was crowded with anxious mothers, sisters, cousins, and aunts—the male members of the respective families having been wise enough to stop away. At last the curtain rose. My poor mother was horrified to see me disgracing my prominent position by standing more awkwardly than any of

the others, my pretty frock already disarranged, and my hands spread so conspicuously over my chest that, in her eyes, they soon became the most prominent part of the scene. Losing the tune, I suddenly stopped, and foolishly began to giggle. My mother overheard some one remark, "What a funny, awkward little girl!" Others laughed outright. The performance over, I felt very like a great heroine, and took my "consolation prize" (what an excellent institution it is!) as though it had been some well-earned laurel; only I could not quite understand my mother's crest-fallen look. That was my "first appearance upon any stage!"

CHAPTER II

DURING the following term the convent was stricken with a contagious fever, and I was taken away from its friendly shelter just as I had begun to love it. The serious illness that ensued was made almost pleasant by my mother's care, the companionship of that best of friends, my brother Joe (to whom, alas! I gave, with unconscious liberality, all the ills my flesh was heir to), and by the frequent visits of our Nonie, who often improvised, or played from some favorite master, on the organ below, thus cheering my convalescence, and making the names of Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven familiar to me long before I had ever heard the magic one of Shakespeare. A year of idleness followed this illness, greatly relished then, but later, when the irrevocable flight of valuable time was realized, deeply regretted. De Quincey says that by deducting time for eating, sleeping, exercise, bathing, illness, and so forth, a person of threescore and ten has only eleven

and a half years left for the development of what is most august in our nature. When study was recommenced, it was at a day school—the Presentation Academy. There, with accustomed indolence, I learned nothing, with the exception of reading, in which I was generally head of the class. Every day I was sent to school with a shining morning face, a fresh frock, and a tidy blue ribbon to bind my obstreperous locks. Every evening I returned home with the frock ink-stained and torn, the pretty ribbon lost, and looking about the head and hands a veritable “Strubelpeter.” I was punished continually for not knowing my lessons: made to stand in a corner balancing a book upon my head, or to sit on the dunce-stool, which, fortunately for me, was softly cushioned. “I love sitting here,” said I to Sister du Chantal—who was fond of me in spite of my mischievousness, and who always administered necessary punishment in a kindly way—“for I am nearer to you, can see the girls better, and this seat is so much more comfortable than those hard benches.” Dr. Griffin’s brother, Guilderoy—always a favorite with me—lived near us in those days. He was a man of talent, who had written some interesting studies on literature “My Da-

nish Days," etc., while he filled capably the position of United States Consul at Copenhagen, in Samoa, and New Zealand. In Denmark he formed a friendship with Hans Christian Andersen. Unselfish and deeply sympathetic, Guilderoy was popular with young and old. My brother and I were taken at his request to his charming parties whenever any person of interest graced them. It was on one of these occasions that I saw George D. Prentice for the first time. Celebrated as a poet and wit, his caustic remarks in the journal he edited made him the object of as much fear as admiration. Having been told that Mr. Prentice was a great man, that he was not to be talked to or stared at, my terror may be imagined when he took me on his knee; for though his heart was kind, his face, doubtless from having had many hard fights with the world, wore a stern, forbidding look, and was deeply furrowed with care-worn lines. His manner was gruff, and his hands, I noticed, were soiled and ink-stained. After trotting me on his knee until I was "distilled almost to jelly" with fear, he took me across the room to ask questions, and receive answers from that uncanny little machine, La Planchette, in which he was greatly interested. The result of that meet-

ing was a frightful nightmare, in which Mr. Prentice, with his gaunt figure, thin gray locks, and Mephistophelian brows, appeared as a magician, and La Planchette as a small grinning devil under his spell.

It was my desire to be always good and obedient, but, like "Cousin Phoenix's legs," my excellent intentions generally carried me in the opposite direction. On seeing a minstrel show for the first time I was fired with a desire to reproduce it. After a week of secret plotting with Joe, I invited Dr. Griffin and my mother to a performance of the nature of which they were utterly ignorant. It took place in our front parlor, the audience sitting in the back room. When the folding-doors were thrown open my babysister and I were discovered as "end men." She was but eight months old, and tied to a chair. Our two small brothers sat between us, and we were all as black as burned cork well rubbed in by my managerial hands could make us. Blissfully ignorant of my mother's mute consternation, I gayly began the opening chorus:

"Good-bye, John! Don't stay long!
Come back soon to your own chickabiddy."

The scene that ensued I need not describe. Af-

ter being punished for some such naughtiness, I usually wended my way to the attic, that being the most gloomy part of the house, where, indulging my misery to the full, I would imagine myself dead, and revengefully revel in the thought of my mother's repentant grief over my coffin. On seeing my tear-stained face she generally gave me a "dime," to soothe my wounded feelings, which it invariably did as soon as I could reach an "ice-cream saloon," and there invest in a saucer of "child's delight."

At that time my brother and I had two farms in the hills of Indiana. Twice a year we crossed the beautiful Ohio to visit them. There we found some excellent horses, and it was not long before I learned to catch one in the paddock and mount and ride without saddle or bridle. I had been strictly forbidden to indulge in such a reckless amusement, but one day, seeing a wild-looking colt prancing about the pasture, I forgot good resolutions and promises, and, catching him after some difficulty, I sprang upon his back, and away we flew. He soon got the rope between his teeth, and my control over him was gone. He then made for a thick wood, and dashed under so many low-hanging boughs that at last he suc-

ceeded in beating me off his back. Quickly recovering, I remounted him, and continued riding at a wild pace for another hour. The next morning, as I was unable to rise, my mother came into the room in alarm. She soon discovered that I had been badly cut, and, to quote a friend, was covered with "French landscapes." For a long while it was thought I should be crippled for life. In spite of various accidents, riding has always been my favorite amusement. Years after, in London, a well-known riding-master said to me, "Why, Miss Handerson, you 'ave missed your vocation. What a hexcellent circus hactor you would 'ave made! I'd like to see the 'orse as could throw you now." My early training without stirrups, often without saddle or bridle, had taught me how to sit firmly.

For twelve years we never quitted Kentucky, except to visit our farms in Indiana. My outer life during all that time was uneventful and commonplace, tedious, though wholesomely monotonous. One of our few excitements was the usual summer visit to the beautiful Blue Grass Country, near Louisville, where the long, waving grass, especially when viewed from a distance, has a blue, silvery bloom. One summer our holiday was

passed on a large picturesque farm, near which was a small graveyard, where the "rude forefathers" of the farmers slept. It was a wild, romantic spot, this little God's acre. I went there frequently, and worked myself into a sham sentimental sadness, actually shedding tears over the graves of the defunct farmers and their relics, never having seen nor heard of any of them, and knowing their virtues only through their friendly epitaphs. What actors we all are, little girls in particular!

Up to that time I had always been the chief of our small band—active, impulsive, full of initiative, and energetic to a fault. Thought and feeling had scarcely been awakened. Even my religion was purely instinctive, though in hours of need my prayers were full of confidence and fervor.

At the age of twelve I first heard the name of him who was to awaken the serious side of my nature, and eventually shape my later career. One night Dr. Griffin, who had in his youth prided himself on his acting as an amateur, took down from the book-shelf a large, well-worn, red-and-gold volume.

"This," he said, "contains all the plays of William Shakespeare, and I mean to read to you the great master's masterpiece, 'Hamlet.'" Though I

understood nothing of the subtle thought and beauty of the tragedy, the mere story, characters, and, above all, that wonderful though nameless atmosphere that pervades all of Shakespeare's dramatic works, delighted and thrilled me. For days I could think of nothing but the pale face and inky cloak of the melancholy prince. The old red volume had suddenly become like a casket filled with jewels, whose flames and flashes, I thought, might glorify a life. I often stopped to look at it with longing eyes, and one day could not resist climbing up to take it from its shelf. From that time most of my play hours were spent poring over it.

One night, not long after, the family were surprised to see me enter the parlor enveloped in one of Dr. Griffin's army cloaks. I was scowling tragically, and at once began the speech,

"Angels and ministers of grace, defend us!
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned,"

my version being,

"Angels and *minstrels* of grace, defend us!
Be thou a spirit of health, *or goblin's dame.*"

The latter innovation was made to evade having on my conscience so sinful a "swear" as *damned*.

Those present, seeing the drift of my entrance, burst into laughter at the droll little figure with its much-bepowdered face. Feeling this to be disrespectful, I indignantly quitted the room, falling over the cumbersome cloak in what was meant to be a majestic exit. Certainly a very unpromising first appearance in the bard's great masterpiece!



CHAPTER III

THE first play I ever saw was "Richard the Third," with Edwin Adams as the crook-backed tyrant. Young, graceful, handsome, an ideal actor in romantic characters, he was hardly fitted for so sombre and tragic a part. Yet the force of his personal magnetism stamped his every word, look, and gesture indelibly upon my memory. The music and lights; the actors and actresses, whose painted faces seemed far more perfect to me then—I was but twelve years old—than anything in nature; luckless Anne; Henry the Sixth, who, though he is an interloper in the play, makes, through Cibber's daring, a splendidly effective acting scene; the royal army, consisting of six "scrawny," knock-kneed supers, with a very un-military look about them—all are as clear before me now as though I had seen them yesterday. How we always remember the first dip into a new sensation after impressions of things a hundred-fold greater are blotted from our minds!

My mother, seeing my delight in the play, promised that, if we deserved it, my brother and I should occasionally attend the weekly matinées. With such a reward as two theatre tickets in view, any amount of good conduct was cheap in payment. I became less mischievous and forgetful.

We were blessed with but little of this world's goods at the time, and, my help in the household being needed, I was taught the culinary art. In a few months I could cook an excellent dinner when called upon. I remember sitting by the stove with a basting-spoon (to be used on a turkey) in one hand, and Charles Reade's "Put Yourself in His Place" in the other. "The Winter's Tale," "Julius Cæsar," and "Richard the Third" were also read as I sat by the kitchen-fire baking bread. The theory that it is impossible to do two things at once did not appeal to me. I felt certain that no one could enjoy the poet's inspiration more than I, and at the same time turn out a better loaf. Thankful I have always been for the knowledge of these useful arts—which I think every girl should master—as they are wholesome both for mind and body.

When the longed-for Saturday came, little Joe

and I would start for the old Louisville theatre, then on the corner of Fourth and Green streets, quite two hours before the doors were opened. The man in the lobby, observing my singular keenness, soon allowed us, early as it was, to enter; though he was compelled to lock the door after us. We would then sit alone in the large, dimly lighted theatre, feeling the most privileged of mortals, silently watching the great green curtain, and imagining all the enchantments it concealed. After an hour of such amusement, mysterious feet, generally in shabby boots and shoes, were seen under the curtain. This caused us great excitement. Then the doors opened; people began to drop in; there was a rustle of programmes and banging of seats. Suddenly the foot-lights flared against the green curtain, under which mysterious feet were seen again, this time in dainty satin slippers or shoes: so many feet, so differently shod, yet all meeting on one common ground before the peep-hole in the curtain. Then the orchestra, full of noise, especially at the "furioso finale"; after which a tinkling bell, and, to the traditional pizzicato (if the villain commenced the play) or the sweet tremolo of violins (if the angelic maiden began), the curtain slowly rose. From

that moment we became oblivious of everything but the scene before us, and only after the curtain fell upon the last act was our dream broken, when, with a shock, we found ourselves once more in the cold and dusky streets. To leave the Temple of Enchantment and come back to commonplace realities was our only sadness. Fairy plays, melodramas, and minstrel shows formed our regular *menu*. An announcement that Edwin Booth was to visit Louisville filled its play-goers with delightful anticipations. Times were hard, we were poor, and many sacrifices had to be made to enable us to witness a few of his performances. "Richelieu" was the first of the series. What a revelation it was! I had never seen any great acting before, and it proved a turning-point in my life. The subtle cunning with which the artist invested the earlier parts of the play was as irresistible as the power, fire, and pathos of the later scenes were terrible and electrifying. It was impossible to think of him as an actor. He *was* Richelieu. I felt for the first time that acting was not merely a delightful amusement, but a serious art that might be used for high ends. After that brilliant performance sleep was impossible. On returning home I sat at the window

of my little room until morning. The night passed like an hour. Before the dawn I had mapped out a stage career for myself. Thus far, having had no fixed aim of my own making or liking, I had frittered my time away. Then I realized that my idle life must end, and that much study and severe training would have to be undertaken; this in secret, however, for there was no one to go to for sympathy, help, or advice in such a venture. Indignant that all my people had, in times gone by, looked upon so noble an art as harmful, if not sinful, I felt no prick of conscience in determining to work out clandestinely what seemed to me then my life's mission. I was fourteen years of age, inexperienced and uneducated, but I had not a moment of doubt or fear. Mr. Booth's * other performances intensified my admiration for his art, and strengthened me in my resolution. Who can ever forget his Hamlet? Where shall we find another such Iago, Richard, Macbeth, Shylock? Surely,

*That charming woman and artist, Helen Faucit (Lady Martin), once told me that, since Macready, few actors had approached Mr. Booth in intellectuality, perfect elocution, grace, personal magnetism, or the power of complete identification with his characters. It was a great pride to me, an American, that this gifted and severely critical Englishwoman appreciated so unstintedly our beloved actor.

"He was the Jew
That Shakespeare drew."

Would not Macklin himself have given him the palm for his portrayal of that great character? I am proud to owe my awakening to the possibilities of dramatic art to such a master.

His engagement over, I made a proposition to my mother, a promise rather, that I would apply myself earnestly to study if allowed to work at home, school having grown unbearable; I agreed that, if at the end of a month she saw no improvement, I would willingly return to the academy. After much consideration, she determined to give this new arrangement a trial, the old one having been far from successful. I selected for my study a small whitewashed carpetless room at the top of the house, where no one was likely to intrude; its only furniture a table and chair, a crucifix, a bust of Shakespeare, a small photograph of Edwin Booth, and a pair of foils, which I had learned to use with some skill. Bronson, Comstock, and Murdock on Elocution, Rush on the Voice, Plutarch's Lives, Homer's Iliad, and the beloved red-and-gold volume of Shakespeare were my only books; and these had been stolen by degrees from the library below. After many

years in more luxurious apartments, how often have I longed for that fresh, sunshiny little den !

A short time before, I had had an attack of malignant diphtheria, which would have proved fatal but for the successful operation Nonie had been bold enough to perform. The attack left my throat very weak. Realizing that a far-reaching voice was one of the actor's most essential instruments, my first effort, on beginning work, was to strengthen mine. In Comstock there were certain instructions upon breathing which I promptly made use of. Strange it is, but very few of us know how to breathe properly. The simple method of taking a deep, full breath through the nose, without strain, holding it as long as possible and slowly exhaling it through the mouth, never going through the exercise more than twelve times consecutively, and always in the open air, not only freshens one, like a dip in the sea, but, when followed by certain vocal exercises, gives control over the voice, which it strengthens and makes melodious. At the end of six months my voice was hardly recognizable, it had become so much fuller and stronger. Here was a great difficulty overcome. As a voice that can be heard is the alpha of the actor, grace is one of the requi-

sites next in importance. Tall for my age, I was conscious of being extremely awkward. This defect was not so easily remedied, and for years, in spite of constant efforts to conquer it, remained one of my great drawbacks.

The parts of Richard the Third, Richelieu, Pauline, and Schiller's Joan of Arc were memorized and studied in detail. School-room lessons were also worked at with such good-will that in one month I had made more progress than during six at school. So satisfactory was the new system that it was allowed to continue. The real cause of this improvement no one guessed. My secret, however, consumed me. I longed to tell some one of my plans for the future, and, above all, to show how I could read and act, for as yet I had no proof that I was working in the right direction.

In the South most of the servants were negroes. Among ours was a little mulatto girl ("nut-brown maid," she called herself), whose chief attraction to me was her enthusiasm for the theatre. One night in desperation I went to her while she was washing dishes in the kitchen, and there unfolded all my hopes. It was to her I first acted, and it was she who gave me my first applause. The clapping of those soapy, steaming hands seemed to me a

veritable triumph. Believing that a tragic manner alone would sufficiently impress the situation on the "nut-brown maid," I began with a hollow voice and much frowning of the brow, "Juli, wilt thou follow and assist me when I quit my childhood's home to walk in the path of Siddons, Kemble, and Booth?" "Oh, Miss Manie, you kin count on dis pusson, fo' de Lor' you kin! Why, my stars, what a boss actor you is! But you mus' 'low me to call your maw;" and in a trice she was gone. A few moments later she re-entered the kitchen with my mother, who was greatly surprised by my performance in the fourth act of "The Lady of Lyons," which could not have been acted in a more appropriate part of the house. She, in turn, called the critic of the family, Dr. Griffin, who likewise was astonished, and made my heart beat with joy by saying, "You'll make a good actress some day. Your scene has thrilled me, and I would rather have rough work and a good thrill than any amount of artistic work without it." Spurred on by such encouragement I worked harder than ever, often staying up half the night to get some effect while trying to look into the heart and mind of the character under study. After that evening in the kitchen I read scenes or acted them nightly to our

small household, usually from "Hamlet," "Richard," or Schiller's "Maid of Orleans."

Dr. Griffin was practising medicine at the time, and happened to be called in to see Mr. Henry Wouds,* the leading comedian of Macauley's Theatre. He spoke to the actor so continually and enthusiastically of my work, that the latter at last requested a reading from me. Richard was the part, I determined, would be the best, not to read, but to act for him. The interval before the day fixed for this trial was intensely exciting, and I was painfully nervous on seeing Mr. Wouds, accompanied by the stage and business managers of the theatre, coming towards our house. I had never before seen an actor off the stage; this was in itself a sensation, and I felt, besides, that my whole future depended on his judgment of my work. The acting began, and was continually applauded. When over, Mr. Wouds sprang towards me, and, taking both my hands, said, "Let me be the first to hail you as our American Rachel." Those never-to-be-forgotten words from an actor whom I had so often admired left me speechless with gratitude; more to Heaven, how-

* A few years later, wearying of the stage, Mr. Wouds entered the Church, where his preaching was highly appreciated.

ever, than to him, for I felt my constant prayers for success had been answered, and that to them alone could such wonders be attributed. The others likewise made predictions for my future as flattering as they were unexpected. They advised me to continue working as I had begun, agreeing that earnest study in my case would be more effective than beginning in a stock company at the foot of the ladder.

Mr. Wouds was soon called away to support Miss Charlotte Cushman during her engagement in Cincinnati, Ohio. He evidently spoke of my work to the great artist, for, a few days after his departure, a letter came from him saying that Miss Cushman wished to hear me read. She had said to him, "My good friend, I trust your judgment as far as I trust any one's, but in such matters I prefer my own opinion. You have aroused my curiosity. Use your influence to get the girl to come and read or act for me." My mother, thinking such attentions injurious to one so young, grew nervous when she saw that not only was I bent upon going, but that my usual champion, Dr. Griffin, meant to aid and abet me. He urged her to make the short trip, if only to see the great actress. With much persua-

sion he won the day, and we started for Cincinnati.

The first character in which we saw Miss Cushman was Meg Merrilies, in an indifferent dramatization of Sir Walter Scott's "Guy Mannering." When, in the moonlight of the scene, she dashed from her tent on to the stage, covered with the gray, shadowy garments of the gypsy sibyl, her appearance was ghost-like and startling in the extreme. In her mad rushes on and off the stage she was like a cyclone. During her prophecy—

"The dark shall be light
And the wrong made right,
And Bertram's right, and Bertram's might,
Shall meet on Ellengowan's height"—

she stood like some great withered tree, her arms stretched out, her white locks flying, her eyes blazing under their shaggy brows. She was not like a creature of this world, but like some mad majestic wanderer from the spirit-land. When Dirk Hatterick's fatal bullet entered her body, and she came staggering down the stage, her terrible shriek,* so wild and piercing, so full of agony and

* An actor who played Dirk Hatterick with her told me that at this climax she struck her breast, which was like a coal of fire with the disease that was fast killing her, and that her cry was one of intense agony.

yet of the triumph she had given her life to gain, told the whole story of her love and her revenge. When, after her awfully realistic death scene, she had been carried from the stage, there was perfect silence in the crowded theatre, and not until the curtain fell upon the last few lines of the play did shouts of enthusiasm break the stillness. The surprise and pleasure of the audience knew no bounds when, having washed off her witch's mask, she came before them *in propria personâ*, a sweet-faced old lady, with a smile all kindness, and a graciousness of manner quite royal. Indeed, I never saw such charm and dignity until years after, at Westminster Abbey, when, celebrating her Golden Jubilee, Queen Victoria, with one sweeping courtesy, acknowledged with majestic grace the presence of the assembled multitude.

It was arranged that we should meet Miss Cush-

Talma believed that an actor had two distinct beings in him, apart from the good and the evil we all possess—viz., the artist, who is any character he may be cast for, and the man in his own person. His theory was that the artist always studies the man, and cannot consider himself near perfection until he becomes master of the man's every mood and emotion. He describes the death-bed of his father, and the grief he felt in losing so excellent a parent, but adds that even in that solemn moment the artist began curiously to study the grief of the man. Yet he does not speak of the artist giving the man physical pain for the production of a stage effect, as did the great Cushman.

man the next day. We accordingly awaited her in the large parlor of the hotel. Presently we heard a heavy, masculine tread, and a voice, too high for a man's, too low for a woman's, saying, "I am sorry to be late, but some of the actors were duller than usual this morning." She stood before us, her well-set figure simply clad, the short hair in her neck still in curling-pins, showing a delightful absence of vanity, for she had just come in from the street. She looked at me for a moment with the keenest interest in her kind, blue-gray eyes, then wrung my hand with unexpected warmth. "Come, come, let us lose no time," said she, in her brisk, business-like way. "Let us see what you can do. Richard! Hamlet! Richelieu! Schiller's Maid of Orleans! A curious selection for such a child to make. But begin, for I am pressed for time." It was trying to stand without preparation before so great a woman, but, with a determined effort to forget her, I acted scenes from "Richelieu" and "Jeanne d'Arc." When the trial was over, I stood before her in that state of flush and quiver which often follows our best efforts. Laying her hand kindly upon my shoulder, "My child," said she, "you have all the attributes that go to make a fine actress; too much force

and power at present, but do not let that trouble you. Better have too much to prune down, than a little to build up." My mother was troubled at hearing her speak so calmly of the stage as my future career, and protested earnestly. No one, she said, of her family, nor of my father's, had ever been on the stage, and she added that, to be frank, she did not like the atmosphere of the theatre, and could not look with favor upon a child of hers adopting it as a profession. Miss Cushman listened attentively. "My dear madam," she answered, "you will not judge the profession so severely when you know it better. Encourage your child; she is firmly, and rightly, I think, resolved on going upon the stage. If I know anything of character, she will go with or without your consent. Is it not so?" (to me). "Yes," said I—and how my heart beat at the confession! "Be her friend," continued she to my mother. "Give her your aid; no harm can come to her with you by her side." Then turning to me again, "My advice to you is not to begin at the bottom of the ladder; for I believe the drudgery of small parts, in a stock company, without encouragement, often under the direction of coarse natures, would be crushing to you. As a rule I advocate begin-

ning at the lowest round, but I believe you will gain more by continuing as you have begun. Only go to my friend, George Vandenhoff, and tell him from me that he is to clip and tame you generally. I prophesy a future for you if you continue working earnestly. God be with you! Doubtless in a year or two you will be before the public. May I be there to see your success!"* With a hearty farewell she stalked out of the room. That was our first and last interview. In her almost brusque manner she had led me to the right path, and had, in less than an hour, fought successfully the dreaded battle with my mother. In two years' time I had made my *début* upon the stage, and she, the greatest of all American actresses, was sleeping her last sleep in a laurel-covered grave at Mount Auburn.

* Miss Cushman's words have been given, not because they were flattering to the writer, but because they show the quick decisiveness, insight into character, and generosity of the eminent woman.

CHAPTER IV

It was arranged after much discussion, and great difficulty in obtaining the wherewithal, that we should go to New York to consult Mr. George Vandenhoff. After the interview with Miss Cushman (whose kind interest in me I can never forget), and assured that only good characters in good plays would be attempted, my mother became greatly interested in my work. Her help in every way proved inestimable.

It was with delight that we started for New York. Apart from the novelty of a first long journey, and the pleasure of watching the varied scenery, I felt an indescribably joyous gratitude to Heaven in realizing that every mile was taking me to further advancement in my work, and nearer to the life I was longing to begin. Arrived at our destination, and marvelling at the great city, I found myself in the home of my mother's people. For the first time I saw my excellent grandparents. We immediately lost our hearts to one another.

At Sixteen. From Photograph.





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They seemed to realize that the severe though well-meant discipline with which they had brought up their children had been a mistake, and, as most of us do, on becoming conscious of our errors, rushed to the other extreme, allowing me to rule, a monarch supreme. They were charmingly old-fashioned people. Though they had left their home at Düsseldorf when first married, and had spent the best part of their lives in America, their strong German accent never left them. Knowing their violent prejudice against the theatre, we decided not to reveal to them the object of our visit. My ambitions and hopes were likewise kept from Pater Anton. It was painful to hold back from them what was so engrossing to us, but we did so, fearing a possible estrangement. Being tempted on one occasion to confess all, I began by mentioning the name of Edwin Booth. They had heard it, or seen it on some street poster, but—"These actors with their dreadful painted faces, their lives of unwholesome publicity and excitement, and the vanity it all leads to, why should *you* speak of them?" I discreetly dropped the subject, feeling it would be kinder to leave them in ignorance of my plans.

The first interview with Mr. Vandenhoff was



most disheartening. Though already advanced in years, he was full of fire and vigor. The expression of his face was stern and far from encouraging; and his manner on that day was annoying in its extreme brusqueness. He insisted upon my reading from a book. This was a blow; a book is such a hinderance when you know the words thoroughly. I began the first scene from "Richard the Third:"

" ' Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York,
And all the clouds that lowered upon our house
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried ! ' "

"Stop!" he thundered; "you would split the ears of the groundlings with a voice like that!" This reproof, though he nearly split our ears in uttering it, was well merited, for I had not yet learned that one cannot touch the heart by piercing the ear. But it seemed then a cruelly unjust rebuke. His constant interruptions embarrassed and put me at my worst. Tyro-like, I chafed and champed under the curb, and my relief knew no bounds when the ten lessons, of an hour each, were over. The experience, however, had tamed, clipped, and done me general good, and I shall always be grateful to that capital actor and teacher

of declamation for showing me the folly of attempting male characters, and for suggesting Juliet, Julia, Pauline, and Evadne as better suited to my sex and youth. He had met my unbridled enthusiasm with a calm, business-like check at every turn, which, though painfully irritating at the time, was very beneficial afterwards. Though we met no more as master and pupil, he continued till the time of his death a kind and helpful friend. Returning to Louisville, study was begun on a new plan. I had learned from Mr. Vandenhoff to turn my den into a stage. Imagining one of the walls to be the auditorium, it needed but a step further to crowd the house with an enthusiastic public. A thin audience was never seen in that theatre. Chairs were made to represent the different characters, and a bust of Shakespeare (the Chandos, to my mind the finest of all, though unfortunately not as authentic as the Stratford) was placed at a proper height, and converted into the "leading juvenile." Clifford, Claude, Colonna were the parts assigned to it, but as Romeo, I imagined, it looked least stony. Six months of solitary work were now begun. Dancing and music, of which I was passionately fond, were renounced, and my girlhood's friends and companions given up. The

exaggeration of youth led me to believe that complete concentration on the one subject alone would lead to success. The labor was particularly hard, working as I did in the dark, having no one to consult and no experience to guide me. I longed for help, which never came, except from my mother, who was as ignorant as I of the rules of dramatic art. Still we worked on incessantly, I producing effects, she criticising them to the best of her ability. Often in the middle of the night I would awaken her to show some new point. Indeed, I owe more to her constant and loving interest and encouragement than I can ever hope to repay. To get the hollow tones of Juliet's voice in the tomb, and better realize my heroine's feelings on awakening in her "nest of death, contagion, and unnatural sleep," I frequently walked to Cave Hill, Louisville's beautiful cemetery, there to speak her lines through the grilled door of a vault. Had a thorough schooling in the art been possible, instead of these random and unguided efforts, my work would have been halved and its results doubled.

After a year of this in many ways useless labor, no engagement seeming possible even in the distant future (we knew no manager, and Mr. Wouds

had left our city), I grew ill with weariness and discouragement. Hope had almost sunk beneath my horizon when John McCullough was announced to appear in Louisville.

Anxious to cheer me, Dr. Griffin pocketed his pride, and, without an introduction, called upon the actor. Telling him of my despondency, he gave a description of my work, as seen through his prejudiced eyes. Mr. McCullough hated stage-struck people, and said as much. He came to our house, he afterwards owned, only to rid himself of Dr. Griffin's importunities. It was humiliating for my excellent friend and step-father to have to beg an audience of one on whom he had no claim, but he kept to his point, and at last won the actor's consent to give me a hearing. As may be imagined, when Spartacus* arrived, he was in a gladiatorial mood, ready to combat the entire family, its stage-struck heroine in particular. Seeing that we listened to his tirade against "would-be actors" quite unmoved, he changed his manner, yawned, looked bored, and was generally disagreeable. "I have only a quarter of an hour," he said, "and as you *will* have my opinion of your

* The leading character in the tragedy of "The Gladiator," with which Mr. McCullough was always identified after Forrest's death.

daughter's abilities, she had better begin at once. Be on your guard" (to me); "I shall observe every look and tone and criticise your work unsparingly." In spite of his discouraging manner and words, I went through the potion scene of "Romeo and Juliet," forgetting the stern critic entirely after the first few lines. When I had finished his manner had changed. He remained for several hours, acting with me scenes from all the plays I knew.

After months of rehearsing with the dumb bust in my imaginary theatre, it was with an indescribable emotion that I found myself acting for the first time with a living, breathing Colonna, Claude, Macbeth. After our first interview, which began so unpromisingly, he was kind enough to propose our reading or acting scenes from Shakespeare daily together. He likewise took us all to the first rehearsal we had ever seen. On entering at the back of the auditorium, I could not realize that the barren, dusky, barn-like opening before me was the stage I had always thought the most glittering and romantic place in the world. As to the play, I have never seen it performed, and to this day have no idea what it is about. The actors, book in hand, mumbled their parts indistinct-

ly. Those who had acted in the piece before spoke only the last three words of their speeches, or, in professional parlance, "came to cues." It was one of those rapid, careless rehearsals that could not well be avoided with the unfortunate stock-company system, for, during a week's engagement, a legitimate "star" had time for only one rehearsal daily, as the programme was generally changed every night. It was extraordinary how, with such poor preparation, the actors managed to get through their performances at all. The jumble of dumb-show and meaningless noise over, Mr. McCullough introduced us to the manager of the theatre, Mr. Barney Macauley, known later as "Uncle Dan'l." "Barney," said he, "when you can, put this girl on the stage. If I am a judge of such matters, she will make a fortune for you." Before he left Louisville he offered me the part of Lady Anne, in "Richard the Third," the only character I knew in his *répertoire*, and was amused when I answered that I would rather not play second fiddle, even to him. His friendship from that time proved itself in numberless acts of kindness and invaluable advice when most needed. My thankfulness to him can best be understood by those who, while struggling to make

a career, would have fallen by the way but for the helping hand of one who had trodden the same difficult path successfully. His nature was an exceptionally unselfish and loyal one, his generosity proverbial, and his cheeriness and amiability won for him the name of "Genial John." When he had gone, my solitary study began again. How painfully dull this was after a peep into the active side of an artist's life! My existence was almost that of a hermit. I saw but my own people, and only during meal-time. However, as Tennyson says,


"More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of;"

and prayer, aside from giving me my wish afterwards, kept me from despairing then.

One morning, on returning from the old cathedral after my daily visit, I met Dr. Griffin in front of the manager's house. Neither of us had seen Mr. Macauley since our introduction to him some months before. "Let us call and ask if he can give me a start," said I; "something tells me there may be an opportunity for a first appearance." He acceded. Mr. Macauley received us cordially, and seemed pleased and relieved when Dr. Griffin proposed his giving me a trial at his

theatre. "Why," said he, "this is luck! You have come to help me out of a difficulty. The star I have this week is playing to such poor 'business' that unless he gets one good house before the week is out he may be unable to leave the town. To-day is Thursday; now, if you could act something on the night after to-morrow! Of course I will pay you nothing. I will only give you the theatre, actors, music, etc., gratis. I am certain that in my way of advertising I could crowd the house for that night. I will furnish you with appropriate costumes; but I fear it is very short notice. Could you act on Saturday night?"

Could I? Here was my tide, and, with my mother's consent, I meant to take it at the flood! That had to be gained before an answer could be given. Leaving Dr. Griffin to talk over the rehearsal, etc., I ran through the streets, and reached home panting for breath. Though startled at the suddenness of the offer, my mother gave her full permission. So it was all arranged in a wonderful way! That Thursday was one of the happiest days of my life, filled as it was with brightest hope and anticipation. Only one black cloud hung over it: the thought of Nonie and my grand-



parents, who were all very dear to me. Had I known then that I would never again see the face of the former—that he would die, my mother and I far away from him, and that almost until his death he would refuse to forgive or see me unless I abandoned the stage life which he thought so injurious, nay, sinful—I would even then have renounced what was within my grasp. This estrangement saddened many years of my life, and has cast a shadow over all the otherwise bright and happy memories of him who was the father, friend, and playmate of our childhood's days.

A rehearsal—the only one—was called for the next morning. On my way to the cathedral I was enchanted to see posters on the fences with the following announcement :

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1875.

AMUSEMENTS.

MACAULEY'S THEATER.

Remember Thanksgiving Day Matinée.

SEE THE SPY.

THURSDAY MATINÉE AND EVENING,

The Most Successful Centennial Historic Drama, received
with marked favor, and

MR. MILNES LEVICK,

Accredited with the Greatest Applause.

HARVEY BIRCH, "*The Spy*!"

With Mr. LEVICK in the *title rôle*, supported by a cast of
most unusual excellence.

THURSDAY (THANKSGIVING DAY) MATINÉE AND EVENING,

The Spy. FRIDAY EVENING AND SATURDAY

MATINÉE, *The Spy.*

Saturday Evening—MISS MARY ANDERSON, a young lady of
this city, will make her first appearance on any stage as
Juliet in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*; MILNES LEVICK
as Mercutio, and a powerful cast of characters.


NEXT WEEK.—OLIVE LOGAN in original comedies of
rare merit.

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As I was in the quiet church the hour for rehearsal struck, and I started for the theatre in a radiant frame of mind. Passing with my people through the darkened house and private boxes covered with their linen dusters, I found myself for the first time upon the stage. How strange and dream-like it seemed, that empty theatre, lighted only here and there by the faint glimmer of the gray day without, bereft of all the eager faces it had always been peopled with! And the stage! How dismal it was with the noisy patter of the rain on its tin roof, a small gas-jet burning in the centre, throwing a dingy light on the men and women (they did not relish the extra rehearsal) gloomily standing in the wings! Could they be the brilliant, sparkling courtiers I had seen but a few nights before blazing in jewels and wreathed in smiles? On seeing me, all looked surprised. Some made remarks in whispers, which I felt to be unkind; others laughed audibly. Scarcely sixteen, my hair in a long braid, my frock reaching to my boot-tops, tall, shy, and awkward, I may have given them cause for merriment; but it was as cruel, I thought, as underbred, to make no effort to conceal their mirth at my expense. However, their rudeness was salutary in its effect, put-

ting me on my mettle before the work began. The stage-manager clapped his hands for Act I. The actors immediately rattled off their lines, making crosses and sweeps down the stage quite different from the business I had arranged. I was bewildered, and asked them to go through the play as they proposed doing it at night, and to allow me, at least in my own scenes, to follow the only "business" I knew. "Oh, bother!" said one of the actors, who did not remark the tall figure of the manager at the back of the dark theatre, "I acted in this play before you were born, and I, for one, don't mean to change what I have always done." To have all I had arranged in my sanctum thus upset in every detail threw me out so hopelessly that I was unable to go on with the rehearsal. Mr. Macauley's voice put an end to the awkward pause, saying that he had not thought it necessary to ask them, as old actors, to do all in their power to aid a girl who was then standing on the stage for the first time; and he added, "I must request now that you follow the business she knows, and that you try to be obliging." The sulkiness that followed this rebuke was damping, but the rehearsal proceeded more smoothly.

They were, with three exceptions, the most




dogged, coldly uninterested set of people I have ever met, sneering at my every movement or suggestion. It was a relief to turn from them to that excellent artist and true gentleman, Milnes Levick, and to watch the earnest care with which he rehearsed every line. Most play-goers in America know how full of charm and originality is his reading of this difficult character. His interest in my work, and his almost fatherly kindness, I shall never forget. From that day we became friends, and he has no warmer admirer of his sterling qualities as man and actor than the unknown Juliet of that November morning. At last the rehearsal, so full of torture and disappointment to me, came to an end. With one blow all my beautiful ideals had been dashed to the ground. It was a rude awakening from a long dream, and my heart was sore and heavy as I trudged home through the rain, longing to hide myself in the friendly den, and find relief in tears.


There had been so many humiliations, such cold, cruel treatment from nearly all the actors, that I dreaded the coming of Saturday, when I should have to encounter their sneering faces again. Still, it did come, and my mother and I found ourselves walking to the theatre in the

crisp air of a starry winter night. After the sad experience of the day before, I was hardly hopeful enough to be nervous.

The borrowed robes were quickly donned. They fitted well, with the exception of the white satin train (the first I had ever worn), which threatened every moment to upset me. The art of make-up was unknown to me, and ornaments I had none. When Juliet was called to await her cue, what a transformation in the scene! The actors, in velvets and brocades, were gay and excited, some of them even deigned to give me a condescending nod, while the gloomy stage of the day before was flooded with light, life, and animation. I became feverishly anxious to begin. It was hard to stand still while waiting for the word. At last it came: "What, ladybird! God forbid! where's this girl? what, Juliet!" and in a flash I was on the stage, conscious only of a wall of yellow light before me, and a burst of prolonged applause. Curiosity had crowded the house. "Why, it's little Mamie Anderson. How strange! it's only a few months ago since I saw her rolling a hoop!" etc., were some of the many remarks which, I was afterwards told, ran through the audience.



The early, lighter scenes, being uncongenial, I hurried through as quickly as possible. Even these were well received by the indulgent audience. But there was enthusiasm in the house when the tragic parts were reached. Flowers and recalls were the order of the evening. While things were so smiling before, they were less satisfactory behind, the curtain. The artist who had acted in the play before my birth forgot his words, and I had to prompt him in two important scenes. In the last act the lamp that hangs above Juliet, as she lies in the tomb, fell, and burned my hands and dress badly, and, to make matters worse, Romeo forgot the dagger with which Juliet was to kill herself, and that unfortunate young person had, in desperation, to despatch herself with a hair-pin. But in spite of much disillusion, a burned hand and arm, and several other accidents, the night was full of success, and I knew that my stage career had begun in earnest.



CHAPTER V

IN our home we never read newspaper criticisms on acting, music, or literature, preferring to determine for ourselves what we thought good or bad in each. We did not, therefore, think of the press in connection with my work, and we were surprised the following morning to find that the performance had been mentioned at length, and in a flattering way, by the Louisville papers. I give the least favorable notices:


“Miss Anderson’s *début* last night was a decided success. Of course, her rendition of a character like Juliet, in which so many famous actresses have won distinction, was open to criticism. Its value, however, to correct criticism was an indication of her powers. We are sure that last night saw the beginning of a career which, in its progress, will shed radiance on the American stage.”
—*The Commercial* (Editorial), November 28, 1875.

“THE DÉBÛT OF MISS ANDERSON LAST NIGHT.




—In noticing the *début* of Miss Anderson at Macauley's last night, before proceeding to the necessary task of criticism, we chronicle with great pleasure the fact that she achieved a very decided success. The house was filled with such an audience as only the most favored stars can bring out on Saturday night, and it showed a warmth of appreciation and made such demonstrations of enthusiasm as Louisville audiences rarely indulge in. Miss Anderson was called before the curtain after every act. Considering that she is just sixteen years of age, and has never been upon the stage of a theatre before her first rehearsal upon Friday, her achievement last night may be fairly classed as remarkable. We have too high an opinion of her abilities and of her good sense to think that she desires indiscriminate praise in a notice of her first performance.

“She attempted a very difficult and no less remarkable task last evening in coming before the public for the first time in her life in the character of Juliet. But when we come to consider all the bearings that surround a first appearance, the manner in which she acquitted herself must have been very gratifying to her friends and very encouraging to her hopes. It was brave in Miss



Anderson to attempt Juliet, but in doing so we think she overestimated her strength. In a less exacting character she would have encountered fewer obstacles, and her audience would not have expected so much from her. Miss Anderson demonstrated her possession of very decided talents, which, if properly cultivated, will fit her to shine in the highest ranks of the dramatic profession, and her performance last night shows her possessed of nerve and energy. With these, success can be obtained upon the stage, and if Miss Anderson adopts the profession we shall look to see her make her mark in it, believing her possessed of too good common-sense to let ambition run away with her judgment, and at the same time animated with an energy that will carve her way to the highest point."—*The Commercial* (Dramatic Criticism), November 28, 1875.

Those who have been in print when young naturally remember the feeling of importance they experienced on first seeing their names in a public journal. I was but sixteen, and it seemed to me that a name so prominently put before the world in the Louisville press would be immediately famous throughout the length and breadth of the




land. Fortunately, I soon discovered that such was not the case; for though the performance created some discussion for several weeks, it was apparently forgotten both by manager and public in a very short time.

After a plunge into the sea of public life, it was heartbreaking to be thrown back again upon the dry land of study without practice, hope without realization. The interval of three months with no engagement in sight was not spent, however, in idle moping. The part of Bianca, in Dean Milman's "Fazio," was thoroughly prepared. At the end of that time Mr. Macauley offered me a week at his theatre, which was accepted with joy.

The *répertoire* selected was as follows:

BIANCA	in	"Fazio"	for Monday.
JULIA	in	"The Hunchback"	for Tuesday.
EVADNE	in	Lalor Shiel's "Evadne"	for Wednesday.
PAULINE	in	"Lady of Lyons"	for Thursday.
JULIET	in	"Romeo and Juliet"	for Friday and Saturday.

At the end of the engagement I was in debt to the manager for the sum of one dollar, the houses having been large enough only to cover the running expenses. All I had gained by a week of hard work was a sad heart and a very



sore throat. Besides, creditors became unpleasantly importunate, for my scanty wardrobe was not yet paid for. This consisted of a white satin dress, simply made, which did service for all the parts. It sparkled in silver trimming for Juliet, was covered with pink roses for Julia, became gay in green and gold for Evadne, and cloudy with white lace for Pauline. The unfortunate gown owed its many changes to the nimble and willing fingers of my mother, who spent much time each day in its metamorphoses. A train of velveteen, a white muslin dress, and a modern black silk gown (which, like Mrs. Toodles, we thought "would be so useful," but which had to be discarded after its first appearance) completed my wardrobe—surely a meagre one for five plays of five acts each, requiring at least twelve gowns. We had built up financial as well as artistic hopes for that week, and were disappointed in both. But it proved more successful than was at first thought, for, shortly after, Ben De Bar (one of the greatest Falstaffs of his time) engaged me for six nights at his St. Louis theatre. At the end of that time I found myself in his debt for the sum of six hundred dollars; but the houses had steadily improved, and the press was filled with

long articles, enthusiastic about the present and full of predictions for the future.

After seeing Evadne, Mr. De Bar engaged me for the following week to close that historic old theatre, the St. Charles, at New Orleans, before it was converted into a music-hall or variety theatre. After travelling from Saturday until Monday there was only time for one hurried rehearsal for that night's performance. The company, like the one at St. Louis, was composed of a most helpful and kindly set of men and women, who found no trouble too great to make the plays successful. But our hearts sank very low on learning that not one seat had been sold for the entire week. The outlook was hopeless, and horrible visions of failure and new debts rose up before me. I could not but be amused, however, when the Irish box-keeper said: "Och, the houly saints bliss yer yung heart, not a sate have we sauld for the wake. Oi asked Missus Mc—— if she wud give me the plisure of sinding her a few tickets for the wake. Ye see, she's the mithder of a large family, and Oi thought they wud help to fill up a bit. 'Well,' sez she, condiscendin'-loike, 'if it wud obloige ye, sur, I moight take a few.' 'Divil a bit,' sez I, with me temper up, 'if it's only to obloige me, not a sate do


yus get with thim foine airs. Maybe before the wake's out yees 'ill be beggin' thim of me.'" This, it seems, she did, and in vain, for his heart was like flint against deadheads when success smiled upon him.

Dr. Griffin, quite unknown to us, realizing the disaster of closing the theatre on a first night for lack of an audience, gave the head of one of the medical colleges, an acquaintance of his, a ticket of admission for each of the students, also inviting a number of his army friends. When the curtain rose, to my surprise the house was well filled, though in actual money, I afterwards learned, it contained but forty dollars. Two of my childhood's favorites, General and Mrs. Tom Thumb, sat in a box clapping their tiny hands vigorously.* After the first night the houses steadily increased, and on the last nights were crowded. So successful in every way was the engagement that Mrs. Chanfrau offered me the next week at her theatre, the leading one of New Orleans, only stipulating that Meg Merrilies should be studied and acted on my benefit night. The opportunity of imper-

* The charming wee General afterwards came to pay me a formal call. On entering the drawing-room I found him standing on a chair, so as to be able to see out of the window.

sonating the withered gypsy was a lucky one, for many attributed my success to "youth, etc."

After bidding farewell to the St. Charles, whose stage had witnessed the triumphs of Rachel, the elder Booth, Julia Dean, Forrest, and Cushman, I began my fourth week of public life before a large house at The Varieties. I remember that engagement as one of the pleasantest of my life. The manageress, Mrs. Chanfrau, the handsome wife of "Kit, the Arkansas Traveller" (by-the-way, why do not women more generally manage theatres?) made it one of the freshest, cleanest, and most comfortable places imaginable. She kept it as a good housewife keeps her home—immaculate. Welcoming all pleasantly, she seemed more like a charming hostess to those who acted under her than like the usual business manager. The week passed off very successfully. On Friday I donned the witch's rags for the first time. All my teeth were covered with black wax, except one, which in its natural whiteness produced a tusk-like effect. The hair concealed by gray, snaky locks, the complexion hidden beneath the wrinkles and brown, parchment-like skin of the weather-stained gypsy, the eyebrows covered with shaggy gray hair, the figure bent nearly double,



made the illusion so perfect that my mother could not recognize one feature or movement. The character had been studied at a few days' notice, and the astonishment of all, including myself, was great when it was received more warmly than anything I had attempted. After much enthusiasm from the crowded audience, speeches and presentations were made: checks concealed in baskets of flowers were handed over the foot-lights, and, among other gifts, the greatly prized "Washington Artillery" badge, which made me an honorary member of that battalion, was presented. Miss Mildred Lee* and I were the only lady members, an honor of which we were justly proud; for the splendid bravery of that body of men during the war had won for them the title of "The Tigers."

My unexpected success in New Orleans, a success of which any veteran actor might have been proud, was almost stupefying, coming as I did so suddenly from obscurity into the dazzling light of public favor. Nothing was left undone to make our visit delightful in every way. The railway company's parting compliment was to place at our disposal a special car to Louisville, and all

*A daughter of General Robert E. Lee.

along the journey we had proofs of their constant thoughtfulness. After arriving an utter stranger, it seemed remarkable to be leaving the beautiful Crescent City two weeks later loaded with so many favors and marks of its friendship. My bright dreams were first realized there, and I shall always remember New Orleans with affectionate gratitude.


Our first act on returning was to pay off all our creditors. The satisfaction of doing this with one's own earnings must be felt to be understood. Towards the end of the summer, a week's engagement at Owensboro, a small, pretty town near Louisville, was offered me. The disadvantages of acting with a group of country players, we were told, would be many: the "juvenile leading man" of the company was a rather elderly woman; the scenery, to say the least, not of the best, and the discomforts and inconveniences were sure to be legion. Still, every performance was a gain in experience and ease, and a fever for improvement at any cost, as well as the anticipation of some primitive "barn-storming," induced me to accept the offer. I was a tall, slender Juliet, and my Romeo proved to be a plump, pleasant little woman, probably the mother of several would-be

Romeos and Juliets. The moon she (Romeo) swore by we found to be the head-light of a railway engine hired for the occasion. This was held by a small negro boy perched upon a ladder, who was so amused by the play that he laughed until he shook over the most tragic scenes. His mirth, as may be imagined, was not conducive to fair Luna's steadiness. At one time she was shining in an upper box, at another on the head of a bald musician, often blinding the unfortunates in the front stalls, here, there, everywhere but on the face of her ("Verona's lovely flower") she had been especially hired to illuminate. The conductor of the orchestra was a carpenter by trade, and sawed away as lustily during the day at the boards he was converting into profile statues of Evadne's noble ancestors as he sawed upon his violin at night. These statues, I may remark, bore a striking resemblance, when finished, to the little men and women which cooks cut out of dough and "fry and sugar" for favored children. The week was very successful artistically, for the performances (how bad they were I am ashamed to remember) met with the approval of "the most discriminating audience in the States." This standard of critical excellence I found later to

be of home manufacture, and common to every small town we appeared in. Until one learned that its meaning was not as awe-inspiring as it sounded, it hung like the sword of Damocles over the heads of all young artists like ourselves bent on "barn-storming." Financially the visit was also successful, for the theatre was packed, gangways included, at each performance. A year later we returned to the same town with a company organized by my old friend Mr. Thomas Hall. He had arranged for a short tour with several utility men and women, the leading juvenile comedian of the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, and a few other stray actors from the same city. These were styled on the bills "*A Company of Metropolitan Artists.*"

We played to such full houses at Owensboro that it was decided to give a morning performance, and a "grand matinée" at two o'clock was accordingly announced. Why a matinée should be invariably called "grand" on the bills has always puzzled me. "The Lady of Lyons" was the play. When I arrived to dress for Pauline not a creature had appeared in the auditorium. It was already half-past one. The experienced old stage-manager's advice not to dress for the play

yet was received with indignation. At a quarter to two only rows of empty benches were to be seen on peeping through the curtain. "Doubtless," said I, with a sinking heart, "it will be a fashionably late audience when it does arrive." At two o'clock emptiness and stillness in front, dismay and silence behind the curtain. At a quarter-past, two ladies arrived. At half-past they were still the only audience, and the stage-manager went before the curtain to announce to them that the hall was not deemed sufficiently full to warrant a performance, whereupon the audience left quite contentedly. The walk back to our hotel was painfully humiliating. We fancied ourselves the laughing-stock of all Owensboro. The disgrace, however, was not as great as we thought, for at night the house was crowded, and we then learned that the empty theatre of the afternoon was only due to the fact that a morning performance had never before been given in the town. During that time many of our journeys were made on the Ohio and Mississippi steamboats. These were not always remarkable for their comfort, though bright and pretty enough to look at. I remember once on our way to Cairo (the Eden of Dickens) awaking after a night spent in an



upper berth in what seemed a cold bath. The bedding was soaked through by the rain which had come through the roof of the "floating palace." The result was a bad cold and a pair of eyes so swollen that they were hardly visible. The play that night was "The Lady of Lyons." When as Pauline I reproved Claude for his downcast, smileless looks, and he tenderly answered, "Thine eyes would call up smiles in deserts, fair one," I trembled lest his speech would call up smiles in the audience and ruin our sentimental scene. But they had never seen me before, and doubtless looked upon the tiny "slits" that did service to Pauline for eyes that night as a natural and enduring infirmity. A severe cold is bad enough even in a warm room, with every comfort about one, but to face an expectant audience in an icy theatre on a wet night, to paint one's face and appear gay and happy while coughing and sneezing violently, is a form of absolute torture. It was still pouring with rain when the performance was over. The night was as dark as Erebus. To make matters worse, we discovered that the few "hacks" (vehicles) in the town had already been engaged to take the Cairo aristocracy to their respective homes after the play. There was

nothing to be done but to engage a boy with a lantern and walk to our boat, awaiting us on the Mississippi. The Deschappelles, Glavis, Beauseant, Pauline, and Claude wearily wended their way through the rain and mud. My good friend, Lin Harris, a member of the company, took off his overshoes, and, tearing his handkerchief, tied them to my feet. Kind thoughts, kind words, kind deeds, how brightly they always shine in our memories! After leaving the desolate streets we came to the long wharf, where the mud was ankle deep, and where we continually expected to be set upon by longshoremen. It was very late before we saw the lights of our floating house twinkling in the distance. But every black cloud has a silver lining, and ours shone on the table that night in the shape of an excellent supper which the kind captain had prepared for us. It was during that engagement that I acted before the inmates of a blind asylum. They were close to the stage, and so aroused one's sympathies that it was difficult to go on with the play. The sad, patient faces, with their closed eyes turned towards the actors, were always expressionless, whether pathos or joy was acted before them. Quite different they were from a deaf-and-dumb audience I played to later.

These poor afflicted people were uncommonly responsive to every passion portrayed, unconsciously proving the theory that one is more quickly and strongly affected through the eye than by the ear.

Segnais irritant animos demissa per aures
Quam quae sunt oculis summissa fidelibus.

—HORACE (*Ars Poetica*).

My appearance in San Francisco at Mr. John McCullough's theatre soon followed, and was the most unhappy part of my professional life. With but few exceptions, the members of the numerous company continually ridiculed my work. My poor wardrobe was a subject of special sport to the gorgeously dressed women, and unkind remarks about "the interloper" were heard on every side. The press cut me up, or, rather, tried to cut me down, advising me to leave the stage. Continual taunts from actors and journalists nearly broke my spirit. I slept but little, and then only towards morning, from the exhaustion of weeping all the night. There was no one with whom I could share these sufferings, for pride kept me from hinting my real state of mind by word or look, even to my mother. The effort to smile and seem hopeful before others was as wearying

as the giving vent to sorrow and humiliation when alone. The engagement, with the exception of the last two nights, had come to an end, when Meg Merrilies was given and received with genuine enthusiasm by actors and public. But this success came too late. Only one night remained, and I could not hope to retrieve for Mr. McCulloch all I had lost for him. For the last performance I played Parthenia, for the first time, to his Ingomar. This was also highly successful.

Mr. Edwin Booth was in San Francisco at the time arranging for his appearance there. The one bright spot in that unhappy engagement was meeting him. His assurance that such trials as I was then passing through were beneficial both to character and art gave me new courage. He laughed at my idea of quitting the stage on account of the unkindness of my fellow-actors. "I also am a fellow-actor," said he; "I have sat through two of your performances from beginning to end—the first time I have done such a thing in years—and I have not only been interested, but impressed and delighted. You have begun well. Continue, and you are sure of success in the end." The effect of those words from so great an actor to one in the very slough of despond may easily

be imagined. For years they were as a beacon-light in every hour of failure and discouragement.


The depressing effects of the California engagement were alleviated in a measure by the subsequent success that crowned all my efforts in the South during a tour under the management of John T. Ford. Savannah, with her beautiful Bonaventure Cemetery, her great trees cloudy with silver moss, her magnolias and orange-trees; Charleston, with its quaint thoroughfares, its picturesque battery and characteristic negro oyster-women decked in gay bandannas; Augusta, with its wide streets and double avenues of fine trees; Norfolk, Baltimore, Richmond, Washington, were all visited in turn. The South wins one not only by its natural beauty and proverbial hospitality, but by a nameless and romantic sadness which hangs over it like a shadow of the past. The difference between the North and the South, even to a casual visitor, is extraordinary. The bustle, energy, and enterprise of the former make the tranquillity of the latter appear to be of another country. There is a vigor of youth in the North, while the South, with its repose, its quaintness, its conventionality of life, suggests a history older than itself.

At Savannah a bevy of school-girls—forty or fifty in number—swept past the stage-door keeper, and, bursting into my dressing-room, insisted that I should embrace them one and all. The request was extremely embarrassing. I made a rush for the door, but was seized upon by the crowd, and not allowed to depart until I had kissed them all. This feat accomplished with a very ill grace, I was permitted to quit the theatre. Not being able to find a carriage in which to escape, my mother and I were followed by the entire school, whose ranks were enlarged on the way by stragglers and passers-by until, reaching our hotel, they formed a long procession behind us. My cup of indignation overflowed when a grinning spectator remarked as we passed, “My stars! what a long tail our cat’s got!”

It was during that delightful Southern tour that Dr. Griffin presented me to General—then President—Grant, whom he had known in old soldiering days, when the General had captured and imprisoned him. It was pleasant to see these enemies in war so friendly in time of peace. Kindliness and simplicity were marked traits of the President, while a certain ruggedness of manner and speech that was suggestive of his earlier life gave an ad-


ditional interest to all he said and did. In showing us over the White House his pleasure in pointing out various trophies was undisguised and boyish. While lunching with him, the natural way in which he brought himself down to the level of my youth and small experience of life, without a touch of that visible condescension so annoying to the young, was charming. I resented keenly being treated like a child, and longed for the time when I could meet the older people, with whom I was so often thrown, on a more equal footing. I detested the teens, and felt that all my efforts at dignity would be in vain until at least the venerable twenties were reached.

General Grant had a remarkable memory for faces. Some years after I was met at the door of the hotel in Washington by a man who greeted me in a cordial manner. Not recognizing him, I told him that he must have made a mistake, as I had never seen him before. "So you forget your early friends so easily, Miss Mary!" he answered; "I am General Grant." In my embarrassment I could only excuse myself by saying that my mind was still on the rehearsal I had just left; that he had so changed, etc. "Yes," he answered, laughingly, "I have grown thinner and paler; I am no



longer President, you see, and am consequently less banqueted."

In various other meetings with him I always found the great soldier modest, simple, and unassuming. It was about this time that my friendship with General Sherman also began. He was one of the few eminent men I have met whose interest in every subject of conversation was so great that his particular *métier* could not have been guessed. He knew much about the stage, Shakespeare, and the drama generally, and was a passionate lover of the arts, thinking them all worthy of equal regard. As a critic he was good, though perhaps too enthusiastic over any excellence, however small, if genuine enthusiasm can be called a fault. His manner was brisk and hearty. His personality gave the impression of a rugged strength; so much so that his entrance into a room was like a blast of fresh, invigorating air. He scorned fear and discouragement of every kind, and refused to allow any one, while in his presence, to give way to either. It was easy to understand his influence over his soldiers and his success as a leader of men. Personally I owe him much. Having grown rapidly, I had contracted a tendency to stoop,




which displeased him greatly. He was himself tall and very erect, and was wont to say that, to him, the most perfect man or woman was marred by the slightest stoop. His kindly admonitions finally broke me of the habit. My handwriting was also subject to his criticisms. It amused him to make me write out my signature as legibly as possible, and then decipher it for him; for he said it was more than he could do. I give a part of one of his letters, in which this subject is mentioned for the first time. His allusion to the name of Mary is retained, as it may be of interest:

“HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES,
“WASHINGTON, D. C., 1876.

“DEAR MISS MARY,—What a debt you owe to Providence and to your parents, . . . and the latter have given you the prettiest name in the English language: the one Burns loved so well, and has made immortal. . . .

“But I must not flatter you, for I fear you are overwhelmed with it, and might be spoiled, though surely you possess character enough to resist the danger. *The great room for improvement in you is in your handwriting.* The substance is good, but the writing is not good



enough for you. *Practise at it daily*, and let me have a sample of it occasionally. My love to your Father, Mother, and you.

“W. T. SHERMAN.”

My unfortunate handwriting has always been a subject of worry to my friends. Longfellow, in acknowledging a letter from me, called it “a small Bible with large but illegible print.” My first note to Cardinal Manning caused him to call to his aid several persons to try and make out the signature. Failing in this, and finding, after much difficulty, that the subject-matter of the letter was important, he sent an answer

“TO THE PERSON LIVING AT—”

then followed the address printed on my letter-head. I did not wonder at this, for I have often found it difficult to read my own writing, which is illegible because of an impatience to put down quickly what I want to say. Mr. Thomas Hall once brought me an autograph of Martha Washington, which he advised me to buy, saying it was rare and valuable. I agreed to do so, whereupon he opened the paper, turned down above the signature, and I read, “For two

seats gallery." Not until then did I recognize my own signature on a theatre pass, probably given to a servant a year before.

I doubt if Lady Macbeth or Galatea would ever have been added to my *répertoire* but for General Sherman's constantly expressed wish that I should study and enact both characters. His kindness to any one at the foot of the great hill of fame was proverbial and universal. He never forgot his own difficulties in mounting it, and always stood ready to lend a helping hand to those struggling to reach its summit.

It is impossible to determine the effect of a play or character either upon the public or one's self until it is essayed. A well-known fact it is that a play which reads well frequently fails when acted, and *vice versa*. Disliking Galatea, and thinking the character unsuited to me, I expected failure in undertaking it, and met with success. Deeply impressed by the part of Lady Macbeth, which I had never seen on the stage, I hoped for success in it, and met with failure. My performance, however, was well received by the general public, though it disappointed my best critics and myself.

I believe that Lady Macbeth is not only the

most difficult of all Shakespeare's women to impersonate naturally, but the most unsympathetic to the public; yet none of Shakespeare's works appeal to me more strongly than "Macbeth" as a reading play. "La Fille de Roland," by Henri de Bornier, was also added to my repertory during the Southern tour. The nobility and purity of this tragic drama always touched the audience, and made one wish for others like it. The period it pictures is that of chivalric Charlemagne, still on the throne, full of honorable years, and the blood of Oliver, Roland, and their noble companions showing in the valiant deeds of their sons and the pure and courageous characters of their daughters. When such works not only draw the public, but influence it for good, one cannot but regret that so many which leave a painful, often a harmful effect, should be produced. I am aware that to say this is to run counter to the latest development of the drama; but I fortify my opinion by recalling what Joseph Jefferson once said to me. He was very severe upon plays that drag one through the mire of immorality even when they show a good lesson at the end. "What I could not invite my friends to hear and see in my own parlor," he said, "I would not feel

at liberty to put before my friends in the theatre."

I remember that at a luncheon-party years after the above conversation, "La Tosca" was discussed, and Mr. James Russell Lowell was asked what he thought of the play. "I have not seen it," he answered. "I refuse to have my mind dragged in the gutter. If Madame Bernhardt will appear in such plays, I for one will forego the pleasure of seeing her act." I have also heard Tennyson declaim against "this realism, this degradation of the drama," as he called it.

My engagement at Ford's Theatre, Baltimore, took place during the visit of the Emperor and Empress of Brazil to that city. They came to a performance of "Evadne," and sent for me to go to their box at the end of the play. They were to leave Baltimore the following day. When the curtain rang up on the next night's play, the "Lady of Lyons," it was a pleasant surprise to see them again in the same box. They had returned unexpectedly, and were kind enough to say they had come back expressly to see me in another *rôle*. The second interview with them was longer and even more agreeable than the first. There was a nobility about Dom Pedro's head that re-

mindful one of certain pictures of Charlemagne. His manner and that of his wife was exceedingly sweet and gentle, and I was deeply touched by his cordial wish that I should go to Brazil, where he promised me success, and his and the Empress's patronage. There was much said about their second visit to the theatre, and it was amusing afterwards to hear a newsboy shouting, "Years yur morning pa-pi-er! all about Dan Peter and Mary and her son!"

From my first appearance my work had been difficult and uphill. Without any training, I was gaining experience: not hidden in a small part under the shadow of some great "star," but in the bright light of leading characters, filled with memories of Charlotte Cushman, Julia Dean, and Fanny Kemble, and with the critical eye of the public full upon me. Still I toiled on, hoped on, prayed on, and felt the work slowly growing in ease and finish. But it was painfully disheartening to find myself stranded for lack of technical knowledge whenever the usual enthusiasm in the great scenes refused through weariness or discouragement to glow. Indeed, I would not wish "my dearest enemy" to pass through the uncertainties and despondencies of those early years.

CHAPTER VI


FEW theatre-goers of to-day realize the difference between the old travelling star and stationary stock-company system and the present one, when every star has his or her own support. Though one could cite numerous individuals who have soared high in the theatrical firmament in spite of it, the effect of the former system could not but be pernicious in its influence on dramatic art generally, principally because of the lack of time on the part of the company to study and digest their work, and so give to it the respect and importance due to it as an art. Besides, it seemed to me anything but conducive to intellectual or artistic growth or to originality. It fettered and cramped one, and its conventionalities frequently descended to mere tricks. One of these, much practised at the time, was for the actor to stand in the centre of the stage as far back as possible (in the lime-light, if there was one), so as to force the other artists, in listening

to him, to turn their backs upon the audience, thus concentrating all the attention upon himself; then say his speech, whatever it might be, beginning *pianissimo* and ending *fortissimo*; after which he was to sweep grandly into the corner and wait for his applause, which usually came from "the unskilled" and made "the judicious grieve." Before learning the remedy for this trick, which had in it nothing resembling the manner of "Christian, pagan, or man," I often had an Ingomar, Colonna, Master Walter, take me by the hand, swing me below him, then spring back three or four steps, and keep me during all of his speeches with my back to the audience, literally forcing me down the stage until I was almost in the foot-lights. Dion Boucicault unfolded to me the antidote for this evil, which was, "Simply turn *your* back upon the bellowing artist, and in ignoring him, cause the public to do likewise." It was amusing to see how humbly the old-stager came down from his central position, and turned *his* back to the public—even that, to get you to look at him. These practices often grew into conflicts between actors playing lovers' parts. Each player acted for himself, and ignored the *ensemble*. From this and other equally per-


nicious traditions I soon learned that the training of those companies was worse than no training at all. Like the animals in Noah's Ark, they were composed of two and two "leads," "heavies," "juveniles," "walking," "utility," etc., and, if the theatre was prosperous, a dozen or two "thinkers," of both sexes. The vocation of these was, apparently, to listen, think, sympathize with the joys and sorrows of the hero and heroine, and gesticulate wildly and indiscriminately. They were accused by utility persons, who were a round higher on the ladder, and who occasionally made such remarks as "Yes, my lady," or "The chariot waits, my lord," of carrying their gestures in a box, and using the same on all occasions. Each week brought a different star, with a round of new plays, to these companies (long runs were almost unheard of then), and they had frequently to memorize their parts while standing in the wings during the performance, awaiting their cues—"winging a part," it was called. Rapid study, a hurried rehearsal daily, the rearranging of their costumes for the ever-changing plays, left them no free time to reflect upon the characters they were to enact; and for this uncommon amount of work they gained but a meagre sal-

ary and a facility for memorizing, which is the smallest part of an actor's art.

We visited yearly all the Southern and Western cities which boasted of such companies: Cincinnati, Louisville, St. Louis, Chicago, Baltimore, Washington, etc. Though the experience was very hard, I learned little by it, except many of the most irritating of the old-school traditions, and to identify the art with unceasing drudgery. In the smaller towns, where a travelling circus or a minstrel show was the general form of entertainment, we took a limited company of our own. The inhabitants usually stared at us as though we were the menagerie of one of their yearly shows. Though we produced nothing but strictly legitimate plays, we realized with humiliation that we were classed with the lowest grade of entertainers. I remember one afternoon a small street urchin recognized me, and, calling together a crowd of boys, shouted, in great excitement, "Come along, boys, here's the circus; come on and have a free look at the circus!" He evidently became an admirer, for after the morning's performance we saw his ragged figure in the crowd that came to have a look at "the circus" as it left the theatre. He was standing near the carriage, and, as I




entered it, he looked at me wistfully, and, holding out his dirty little hand, said, "I say, Mary, do give us a kiss!" Such publicity in the streets became very painful to me. I dreaded being stared at and vulgarly remarked; and though I dressed as simply as possible to avoid attention, such incidents were of constant occurrence. On another occasion, while driving to the hotel in an omnibus with the company, the conductor poked his head in at the window and accosted my mother—she being the most dignified looking of the party—with "I say, miss! what time does your show commence?" "Show," being a word connected with the Living Skeleton, Fat Woman, and Waxworks, was more than she could bear. She looked at him indignantly, and, in crushing tones, answered, "My good man, this is *not* a 'show'!" "Well, miss, what in thunder is it, then?" "An intellectual treat!" This answer so mystified her questioner that he remained silent for the rest of the drive, apparently turning over in his mind whether or not he should ask for a free pass to such an ambiguous entertainment as an "intellectual treat." This expression became a byword in the company. Those barn-storming tours were full of incident,



accident, and amusement. I can never forget a morning performance when two young men, who had evidently begun making their New-year's calls early in the day, so disturbed the actors and public with loud remarks that it was with difficulty we finished the scene. When it was over, Mr. John W. Norton, who was part manager and leading man, ordered the offenders to be removed—which had to be done by force. Being pressed for time the following morning, I hurried across to the theatre alone. There I found two hard-featured, collarless fellows upon the stage. One of them approached me, and in a rough voice said: "We are here in the name of the law, to seize your baggage or arrest you." I was too dumfounded to ask them why they wished to make me a prisoner, for horrible visions of false accusations of murder or robbery rose up before my startled mind, and probably made me look as guilty as though I had committed both. The first old woman, the comedian, and a few utility people were on the stage. In the presence of these unshaven guardians of the law they were even more alarmed than I. The situation was terrifying. On recovering a little presence of mind I quickly resolved on escape at any cost.




Extreme politeness was my first move in that direction. With a beating heart but smiling face I placed two chairs for the unwelcome visitors by the stove. Taking one myself, I began questioning them about their families, while anxiously looking for the appearance of some rescuer. Though their replies were discouragingly curt, this ruse succeeded, for when, answering an imaginary call from the wings, I asked for a moment's grace, they readily assented. I knew of a side exit through an alley, often used to escape the curious crowd that generally collected about the stage-door. I walked calmly across the stage, and once outside ran like one possessed to the hotel. There I found Mr. Norton, who hastily escorted me to our rooms, advising my mother and me to remain in them with locked doors. Two more frightened women it would be difficult to imagine, for we had no idea what the threatened arrest meant. Later on we learned that all the trouble had been caused by the ejected disturbers of the day before. Some influential friends went bail for me. There was a trial, and I am happy to say the offenders only received two cents damages. Why they received even this—being disturbers of the public peace—



must, I suppose, remain forever an added mystery to the clouded working of the law.

The tragedy into which my name was dragged, unconscious though I was of the existence of its perpetrator, occurred soon after. I allude to the mournful event which created so much sensation at the time, when a young and attractive girl, imagining her lover attached to me, wounded him and killed herself, after having sought in vain to take my life. Many of those early days were as fraught with danger and excitement as with discomfort and weariness. I have often smiled at the general belief that my path has been one of roses.

During a visit to Canada, while resting in Toronto before beginning a week's engagement, I heard a grand opera for the first time. My pleasure in the music was so great that I had to be constantly reminded not to rise and cry out with enthusiasm. The operas were "Faust," "Trovatore" (old-fashioned, yet ever fresh), and "Martha." Brignoli in the leading *rôles* was admirable, though he had, through growing obesity, lost much of the grace which for many years had made him such an idol with women. His fresh, beautiful, and impassioned voice soon swept one



into forgetfulness of his looks and inferior acting. In those days I always took with me an old friend in the shape of a guitar, upon which, as a child, I had picked out, with much labor, a sufficient number of chords to accompany a few favorite songs. One day Brignoli passed our rooms while I was singing "The Irish Immigrant's Lament." He requested an introduction, and tried to persuade me to start for Milan at once for a year's training, and then to become an opera singer. "But," said I, "I am already on the stage. I act Juliet, Lady Macbeth, and all kinds of fine tragic parts." "Leave them all alone," he answered. "With your voice you would have a far more distinguished success on the operatic than on the dramatic stage." Though delighted to know from him that I could sing, I assured him that I would not let go my hold on the robe of Melpomene for the glories of all the other muses put together.


The difference between the audiences in Canada is very marked. In Toronto and Ottawa they are reserved, and much harder to arouse than at Montreal, where the French element gives to the public a glow of Continental warmth. The enthusiasm there over my work, crude as it was, caused the people to take the horses from my car-

riage and drag it through the streets. This and other marks of their favor were shown, I felt, not for what I then did, but for what they thought my future promised; for I was full of youthful exaggeration, and impetuosity often swept me far away from my characters. Still, this kindness was none the less appreciated, as the encouragement of early efforts often fires the spark of ultimate possibilities. Many English friends in Canada prophesied success for me in London. After a flash of enthusiasm on the subject, these flattering predictions were put aside, for I had no wish to act out of America.

The critical judgment of the Eastern States in matters dramatic was thought by the theatrical profession to be very great, and an artist was not considered in the first rank until he had been stamped with the approval of a Boston or a New York audience. Contented with the South and West as a field for work and improvement, I never thought of the East until attractive offers from several managers induced Dr. Griffin to accept engagements in Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. To me the world seemed to hold no greater artistic centres than these cities, for the thought of visiting Paris or London had never seriously

entered my mind. The excitement of acting in Philadelphia, Boston, and New York was intense. My first character at the Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, was Evadne. At the rehearsals everything was so much brisker and more business-like than what I had been accustomed to, and the whole atmosphere so entirely new, that I was weighed down with apprehension lest the audiences should be different also. Fortunately the familiar faces of some of the "metropolitan artists" who had been with me "barn-storming" made me feel less strange. My surprise at the night's performance, when double recalls continually greeted me, was only equalled by the pleasure I felt when the press verified the success of the night before.

During that visit we saw much of R. Shelton McKenzie, the friend and biographer of Charles Dickens. He was as interesting in himself as in his reminiscences of Sheridan Knowles, Dickens, and many other eminent men, whose names and works had been familiar to me for years. He was a plump little man, with shining brown eyes, and a ruddy face surmounted by a wig of sleek, red hair, which often, in moments of excitement, got awry, causing him much annoyance. I remember how he used to jerk it into place, remark-




ing that it was "a great bore," as it invariably limited his enthusiasm. Upon my asking why he did not discard it, he answered that if he suddenly got rid of such a shock of hair every one would realize that he had been indulging in a wig. I assured him that any one glancing at his locks would easily discover their true nature. When we returned to Philadelphia the next year he appeared with a shining bald head fringed with silvery hair, which gave him an almost Pickwickian cheeriness and benevolence of face—Nature bringing out a frankness and charm of countenance which the false hair had completely hidden. Wigs are certainly great enemies of the human face, even upon the stage. They are useful in saving one's own hair from the curling-tongs, and necessary for illustrating different periods; but they generally mar facial expression, and frequently add to the years they are supposed to conceal.

The unexpected kindness of press and public was a stimulus to renewed effort, and a marked progress was the result. Still, most of my work was, to me, sadly immature and inartistic, and I felt it would take years of practical experience to remedy my lack of an early training. In New York, however, there was great help in store for

me in the valuable advice of Mr. Dion Boucicault and Mr. William Winter. Their insight into dramatic effect was a revelation. Mr. Boucicault entirely rearranged the business of *Ingomar*, and gave me many suggestions for my general work—usually in an abrupt manner, for he had but little patience with what displeased him, and is said to have frequently made his leading artists shed tears under his rigorous direction.

The following letter from the author of "The Shaughraun" was written after the appearance of some severe criticisms in two New York papers. It is very characteristic:

"DEAR MISS ANDERSON,—I had written this, intending to take it to the theatre last night, but was too sick to go out. The *Herald* and *Times* this morning have increased my nausea. Don't be moved by them to lose any confidence in yourself. I knew Julia Dean well, and she is as inferior to you as I am to Shakespeare or Sheridan. They find fault with you for your lack of *Art*, which, if you had it, they would recognize as a blemish in one so young. Julia is neither an heroic part nor a dramatic one. She is nondescript and unnatural, full of stage-trick and




mannerism; of all characters, the least fitted to you. That is clear. I don't think I shall like you in it any more than I should like to see a crinoline and chignon on the Venus of Milo. Wash the blank-verse out of the dialogue, and put Clifford and Master Walter into pants, and "The Hunchback" is a society play (and not a very good one either). What the devil brings you into such a piece, anyhow? Stick to parts where your arms are not bound with shoulder-straps, nor your feet tied together with pullbacks or frills. You want sweep and stride. I think you could play Rosalind, and give it an altitude which few in our times have seen; but you should give it a long study.

"Yours sincerely,

"DION BOUCICAULT."

The difference of opinion about "The Hunchback" is extraordinary. Many persons, among them Fanny Kemble, speak of it as a great play, while the majority of theatre-goers look upon it as stilted and impossible. Personally, I have always had a very great liking for the part of Julia. To me, the drawing of the character from beginning to end is without blemish. She repre-




sents so womanly a type that most young women can hardly help sympathizing with her feminine inconsistencies. The language is undoubtedly bombastic at times; still the substance is good and the sentiment genuine.

From Lawrence Barrett, Edwin Booth, Joseph Jefferson, and Clara Morris I also learned much. Long practice of their art, constant observation, and years of study in the school of hard experience had made them the best of critics.

Up to that time I had allowed the daily newspaper criticisms to influence my night's work. An old actress advised me to give up reading press notices while acting, her theory being that any marked comment, whether in praise or blame, necessarily made one self-conscious of the point or points criticised, thus marring the spontaneity of the performance. Thereafter, articles containing useful suggestions made by capable critics, who clearly stated why the work was good or bad, were carefully put aside, and, when the season was over and study recommenced, often proved profitable. This habit of not reading press notices while acting was kept up till the end of my stage career.


The usual feeling of loneliness and apprehen-




sion on entering each of the large Eastern cities—we had friends in none of them—was of short duration in Boston; for soon after our arrival James T. Fields brought a letter from his friend, Henry W. Longfellow, the poet, inviting us to his house, in Cambridge.

The influence we each exercise over every one with whom we come in contact, either for good or ill, is not to be denied. Longfellow's, I believe, was only for good. Surrounded by the calm of his peaceful home, it seemed as though the hand of evil could not reach him. Every conversation with him left some good result. His first advice to me, which I have followed for years, was: "See some good picture—in nature if possible, or on canvas—hear a page of the best music, or read a great poem daily. You will always find a free half-hour for one or the other, and at the end of the year your mind will shine with such an accumulation of jewels as to astonish even yourself."

He loved to surround himself with beautiful things. I have seen him kneel before a picture which had just been presented him, and study every detail and beauty of his "new toy," as he called it, with a minuteness and appreciation which few would understand. A portrait of Liszt he was



particularly fond of, and he explained how it was painted for him, as he had first seen the master, descending a dark staircase in his own house, the light of a candle, which he held high, shedding a golden glow over his silvery head, leaving the rest of the figure in shadow. However infested with care or work a day might be, a visit from him was sure to beautify it. I once mentioned to him that his poem, "The Hanging of the Crane," was a great favorite of mine. "I am so glad you like it," he said, simply; "few seem to know or care for it, and it is a particular pet with me." The poet was very fond of a good comic story, and had many amusing ones of his own experience. He was particularly delighted at the ingenuity of an enterprising vendor of patent medicine, who, vaunting the "marvellous effects" of his drug, no doubt in the hope of inspiring the poet, invited him to write a verse for the label, promising him a percentage on each bottle, and a free use of the medicine for himself and family. Persons of genius have often to pay dearly for their prominence. On one of his birthdays he was astonished at seeing a wagon containing a piano drive up to his house, followed by a strange young lady in a carriage. The latter informed the housekeeper that




she wished it to be put in a room where it would "sound well," as she had composed a piece of music in honor of the poet's birthday, and meant to play it to him on her own instrument.

Longfellow was a great lover of music, and Wagner appealed to him strongly. We heard several operas together in Boston after my engagement there. He generally arrived before us, armed with flowers and full of delightful anticipation. On one of these occasions some one sent a magnificent bouquet to our box. Not knowing the donor, I did not take it up. He insisted on my doing so. "Put down my simple ones," he said, "and take up these beautiful flowers. It will gratify the giver, who is no doubt in the house; try never to miss an opportunity of giving pleasure. It will make you happier and better." Kindness was the keynote of his character. No inconvenience to himself was too great if a good turn to any one was at the end of it.

A few months before his death, being unable through illness to leave the house, he sent for us again. The usual warm welcome awaited us. Luncheon over, he showed me a "new toy," and tried to be amusing; but there was a veil of sadness over him, and I noticed how feeble he had


grown. "Until the spring, then!" he said, as we parted, "if I'm still here. I wonder if we shall meet again! I am old now, and not very well!" He apologized for not seeing us to the carriage, as was his wont, but stood at the window watching us leave. Its sash was covered with snow. His face looked like a picture set in a white, glistening frame; for the sun was shining, and his hair and beard were nearly as white as the snow itself. I can see him still, standing there, waving his last farewell. Soon after, the whole English-speaking world was saddened by the loss of one of its sweetest bards.



CHAPTER VII

It was in 1878 that I went abroad for the first time. We spent our first evening in Paris at the Comédie Française. Many things in art and nature, too great to be grasped at once, appear disappointing at first sight. I admit that "Hernani," with its fine cast of characters, including Sarah Bernhardt, Got, Worms, and Mounet Sully, did not come up to my expectations. Being used to the broad and bold effects of our early stage, the refinement and *finesse* of the French art meant little or nothing to me. I longed for the artists to fling their restraint to the winds and give the public a good old-fashioned burst in the tragic scenes, such as I had been accustomed to see and indulge in myself. When the curtain fell without it I was unpleasantly surprised. Only bright and flaring colors appealed to me in those days, and the delicate tints and touches with which these French actors gained their greatest effects appeared to me weak and insipid. My disappoint-

ment was in a measure alleviated by a message from Madame Bernhardt, inviting us to see her behind the scenes. My youth had evidently brought my name before the great actress. She received us with charming cordiality, and afterwards asked me frequently to her dressing-room. It was instructive as well as interesting to watch the mysteries of her toilet, which was almost faultless. I once dared to hint to her that she looked far better with less paint on her cheeks and lips. She followed the suggestion at once; indeed, she seemed as much of a girl as I, and had nothing of the awe-inspiring great woman about her. One night we were going through a passage leading to the stage. She was smiling gayly, and looking remarkably youthful and attractive. In a moment her face grew ugly and distorted with anger. Like a flash she ran down the hall, and left me standing there without a word of explanation. I looked around for the cause of this sudden passion, and saw a written notice on the wall, stating that Madame Bernhardt was to act on such a night in a certain play. In a few seconds she came back, the fire gone from her eye, and taking my hand she continued her gay conversation. Her scene over, we returned through the same passage, and




I observed that the notice had been changed to another play and artist. She threw a triumphant glance at the announcement and at me, which plainly said, "See what a queen I am here!"

The *foyer des artistes* of that historic theatre is a beautiful room, hung with portraits of all its great men and women: Mars, Talma, Rachel, etc. While looking at these I asked Madame Bernhardt why her "counterfeit presentment" was nowhere to be seen. "You would like to see my portrait there?" she asked. "Oh yes, very much; you belong there!" was my answer. *Et bien, vous ne me faites pas des compliments!* I cannot have my portrait there until I am dead five years!" And she laughed merrily at my silent discomfiture. The play that night was again "Hernani." I can still see Mounet Sully as the gallant Spaniard, swaggering before the long mirror as he swung his ample cloak about him until its every fold was to his liking; and Got, the father of the theatre, in his sombre costume, playing at cards in the interval before he should thrill the great audience by his terrible entrance in the last act. I could not but recall the days when little Joe and I had felt so privileged at being allowed to sit before the curtain of the old




Green Street theatre, and the change in my life that had brought me to the theatre of Molière seemed nothing short of magic. Like Clara Morris, Madame Bernhardt had a way of turning her back upon the audience to make comic remarks or grimaces to those standing in the wings. It was impossible to compliment her Doña Sol when she constantly distracted one with amusing asides. One evening she said, "I will act for you to-night. It is not good for me, but you will see." After the first acts—a series of triumphs—she came to the death scene. I shall always remember it as the most powerfully realistic acting I have ever witnessed. When it was over, there was wild enthusiasm in the house. The great actress lay upon the stage like one really dead. Her maids ran to her assistance. There was a stain of blood upon the handkerchief put to her lips. A little iced champagne restored her, though she was only able to stand quite still, while the audience thundered its applause. She put her hand on my shoulder on coming off the stage, and, with a faint smile, simply said "*Voilà!*" We had many talks together about dramatic art. She professed the greatest admiration for the works of Shakespeare. It was a




pleasure to act scenes from "Romeo and Juliet" for her, while she sat upon the floor of her *atelier* in her strange working costume of pale gray cloth, made like a man's morning suit, with no hint of the woman about it but the lace scarf around her neck, fastened with a diamond snake, and her tiny white satin slippers. She was a delightful audience, entering into one's conception of each scene and generously applauding every effort. She particularly wished her country people to see Shakespeare acted by an English-speaking artist, and invited me cordially to produce "Romeo and Juliet" in Paris, promising to make all the arrangements, even to engaging a theatre. Consciousness of my lack of technique would alone have prevented my accepting such an offer, but, besides this, several important engagements called me home. I have always had a most enthusiastic admiration for her wonderful genius, and a sincere belief in her goodness of heart.

Among other charming people in Paris I had the privilege of meeting that most noble of actresses, Madame Ristori. Her manner was warm and unaffected, and there was a genuineness about her which put one immediately at ease. It is a




fallacy to believe that all players must of necessity act off as well as on the stage. Many of them do, I admit, but most of the famous ones are extremely simple in real life. I remember once, in an animated discussion on the theatre with his Eminence Cardinal Manning, citing many excellent examples to prove that his theory that all actors must eventually grow into "shams" was not true. This was after my retirement (which event, he informed me, he had prayed for), and he saw that I spoke dispassionately. He listened attentively to all I had to say upon the subject, but was not in the least convinced. His prejudice against the stage was deep-rooted. "From our cradles," he said, "we all have a tendency to act. Small boys pretend to be men, soldiers, anything but what they really are. Tiny girls play at being mothers, cradling their dolls. The so-called art of acting increases this tendency in those who witness it almost as much as in those who practise it. I cannot conceive how the latter can escape being led in time to an unconscious development of artificiality or exaggeration in their thoughts, and, as a natural result, in their speech and manner." His dislike for the theatre was so marked that he could see no good in it. To quote his own words,

"its tendency is downward and pernicious." He was not to be moved from his condemnation of the effects of play-acting, and repeatedly congratulated me upon escaping the stage before age and habit had made me a slave to it. Among other things, he said that when those under his direction asked if he forbade them frequenting theatres, his invariable answer was, "I wish I could!" On one point we agreed entirely: that was in censuring the practice of acting plays in schools and convents for young girls. I have seen much harm done to children, dressed and painted and put before an audience of prejudiced relatives, who, applauding their bad acting indiscriminately, make the little creatures, as a rule, painfully vain and self-conscious. Were any real good to be gained by such exhibitions, one could understand more readily their *raison d'être*; but as the children derive no benefit from them, and certainly give no real pleasure, these performances seem not only a loss of time, but of that modesty and simplicity so beautiful in the young. I have known half a school, where acting and reciting were taught, pose, roll their r's in a theatrical way, and make such droll contortions as to be painfully ridiculous. Were these girls intended



for a stage career such training would be worse than none; but when one considers the weeks of study and rehearsal under poor direction—at least, as far as I have observed—the effect upon their young and impressionable natures is nothing short of lamentable. In saying that acting does not necessarily produce affectation, I mean in those whose characters are already formed. I do not allude to the young and undeveloped, who are wrongly taught the mere outer semblance of the art. Reading, on the contrary, is a charming and useful accomplishment, more easily acquired and less complicated in its possible results.

But, unconsciously, I have wandered far from the subject of this chapter. Our stay in Paris should have been rich in improvement, for I had frequently been in the *coulisses* of the Français, conversing with many of its greatest artists and watching their various methods; but I doubt if much was gained in actual experience. A good effect of the trip abroad—the first holiday I had enjoyed since beginning to study for the stage, six years before—was that it brought back all the buoyancy of youth, which, as an exponent of tragic rôles, I had felt it necessary to subdue. My greatest pleasure was in the Louvre. Rafael,



Leonardo, Murillo, Velasquez, taught me more of grace and beauty than I had ever imagined. My appreciation of Angelico and "Les Primitifs" came later. Pictorial effects are of great importance in dramatic art, and I found, on getting back to work, that my judgment in such matters had undergone a change for the better.

On returning to Liverpool we were delighted to see our old favorite, J. K. Emmet, in his inimitable "Fritz," arousing a usually cold and critical audience to enthusiasm. Soon after our arrival in New York an engagement was begun at the Fifth Avenue Theatre. The *répertoire* was:

BIANCA in "Fazio,"
JULIET in "Romeo and Juliet,"
LADY MACBETH,
PARTHENIA in "Ingomar,"
BERTHE in "Daughter of Roland,"
JULIA in "The Hunchback,"
PAULINE in "The Lady of Lyons,"
MEG MERRILIES in "Guy Mannering,"
EVADNE in "Evadne,"
DUCHESS OF TORRENUOVA in "Faint Heart Ne'er Won Fair Lady,"
and
ION in "Ion."

This last play, by Talfourd, I found so noble in language and pure in plot that, although the


leading part was that of a youth, I could not resist producing it. As a character, Ion was more beautiful to me than anything I had yet acted.

Unfortunately, Talfourd, in this his masterpiece, held his lamp too high for the many. Only the few appreciated the nobility of his work, and they found no praise too strong to express their delight in it. No *rôle* has ever given me more pleasure. And unconsciously I pushed poor Ion forward; but the managers, realizing that the masses did not care for him, snubbed him, to my great disappointment, and finally I was compelled to put him back upon the shelf, whereon he had lain for many years, before I had taken him down at the advice of my old friend, Thomas H. Hall.

The Countess, in Sheridan Knowles's play of "Love," was likewise added to my *répertoire*, but it also failed to please, though it had many strong situations and a charming comedy element. To my thinking it is a better, though unaccountably a less successful, play than "The Hunchback." There is a fine hawking scene in one of the acts, which would have been spoiled by a stuffed falcon, however beautifully hooded and gyved he might have been; for to speak such words as—

"How Nature fashion'd him for his bold trade,
Gave him his stars of eyes to range abroad,
His wings of glorious spread to mow the air,
And breast of might to use them,"


to an inanimate bird would have been absurd. With great difficulty I managed to obtain a splendid hawk, but quite untamed. I undertook to train him myself for his part, which was to fly from the falconer's shoulder to my outstretched hand, and at a certain pressure of his claws to spread his great wings. Armed with heavy gauntlets and large goggles I took him from his cage and fed him on raw meat for many days, hoping thus to gain his affection; but painful scratches and tears were the only result. Mr. Edwin Booth, on one of his visits to our New Jersey home, assured me the only way was to "watch him tame," as Desdemona promised Cassio to watch Othello. This, however, was too wearying, for it meant preventing the bird from sleeping until his spirit should break, when he would become tame for all time. Eventually I managed to subdue him, and, as an actor, his career was highly successful. But constant travel and change of climate proved too much for him. In spite of the greatest care, he at last succumbed, and our noble bird was buried in the alley at the



back of McVicker's Theatre, Chicago, regretted by all his fellow-actors. Another hawk was procured, a very savage one, who on his first appearance escaped from his frightened keeper, and so terrified the audience that he was given up for a stuffed substitute, who, in life, must have been a comedian, for his appearance on the stage was always greeted with laughter.

"Ingomar," of all my plays, was for many seasons the public's favorite. The part of Parthenia was light, and gave me no trouble. Indeed, it was amusing to tame a barbarian even in play-acting, and to observe how the women in the audience delighted in seeing the humiliating conquest of a great chief by one of their sex.

About this time General Sherman, who had for some years suggested Galatea as a most suitable part, presented me with a copy of "Pygmalion and Galatea." After reading it several times I resolved to undertake it. It did not appeal to me in the least; but, as a light part, I thought it would be restful. It was at Booth's, in New York, that I first appeared as the statue maiden. At Booth's the comfort of the artists was considered of as much importance as that of the audience. How different it was from the theatres where I have



known leading actors to be attacked by illness in badly ventilated rooms, or, worse, where the wind in winter blew through them like half a gale, and any uncomfortable box was good enough for the players.* There were warmth, comfort, air, and light for all at Booth's. Though the public gave up that fine Temple of Art so readily, every one who ever had the privilege of acting in it felt a pang when it was converted into a store. There was a hope and belief that the wealthy New York public would buy and restore to their greatest actor the theatre which he had ruined himself in building, and where he had given them productions such as, up to that time, they had never seen.

The dress for Galatea was a great difficulty. The conventional Greek costume, alter it as one would, bore little or no resemblance to the beautiful tunics and draperies of classic times. The abominable "key-pattern" was everywhere to be seen, and seemed always to say, "This may be a velvet gown; but look at *me*, I am Greek, and I can 'Greekify' even a mediæval dress."

In those days stage costumes told one very little of the period they were meant to represent,

* It is said that Rachel caught the cold that ended in her death in the draughty dressing-room of a Philadelphia theatre.

while good cut and color, which give picturesqueness to the simplest garment, were entirely lacking. This was largely due to the fact that stock actors, whose salaries were small, furnished, in most cases, their own wardrobes, and four or five dresses did them service for all the plays of a season. One hauberk in its time played many parts. I have seen Claude Melnotte, a colonel in the French army under General Bonaparte, appear in the gray uniform of a Confederate soldier. Greek and Roman maidens posed in high heels, chignons, and bends miscalled "Grecian," and mediæval Italians strutted the stage in French clothes of the last century. But even this was an improvement on the white wig and red coat worn by David Garrick in "Macbeth." I confess to having donned stiff skirts and French heels in a Greek part for several seasons. One seemed at the mercy of the costumer, who, in spite of prints and prayers, invariably finished a classic robe with a modern balayeuse. I was beginning to despair of ever possessing anything like a real tunica when Mr. Frank D. Millet came to my rescue. From that time my classic wardrobe was entirely satisfactory, for not only did this excellent artist and friend design the most charming and correct cos-



FROM PROFILE SKETCH BY FRANK D. MILLET




1. The first part of the document is a list of names and dates.

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3. The third part of the document is a list of names and dates.

tumes for me, but had them cut and made under his own supervision. They were decried at first, as new things generally are, but in a short time even "old-stagers" voted them both beautiful and effective. There was a particular pleasure in merely donning the simple and flowing draperies. Heels and wigs were given up with alacrity to obtain the desired effect, and in freeing one's self from the iron grip of stays (a Greek dress cannot be worn well with them), the figure became immeasurably more supple and graceful; for, even when not laced tightly, their stiffness gives a wooden, dead look to the torso, which is the main-spring of easy movement.

My attention had been called some time before to the Delsarte system. Always on the alert for improvement, I determined to study it. As far as mechanical exercises were concerned, it seemed to me perfect, for it overlooks no muscle or tendon of the face or body, and gives strength, suppleness, and control over them all. The rest of the system I afterwards found it best to discard. One of its weak points is the theory that *outward* expression and movement awaken and control emotions; that it is only necessary to place the body and fix the muscles of the face in certain



ways to *feel* for the time pain, anger, love, hate, or whatever passion one wishes to simulate.

About this time—1880-81—offers were received from several English managers, including one from Sir Augustus Harris. These were refused, together with Mr. Henry E. Abbey's proposal to take me across the Atlantic; for my heart failed at the thought of appearing before strangers. Some time after Mr. Abbey assured me that a rest from the usual yearly tour would be both wise and profitable, and I was induced to accept an eight months' engagement at the Lyceum Theatre, in London.

After the contract was signed I heard from many that American artists never succeeded in England, that they invariably lost money there, and that the English felt it a duty to crush aspiring Americans, socially as well as artistically. These reports were far from reassuring, but there was no escape from the contract. It seemed a year of torture was drawing near, and I suffered much at the mere thought of what was before me. My last performances before sailing for England were at the Dramatic Festival in Cincinnati, held at the Academy of Music, an enormous building with a seating capacity of over eight thou-



sand persons, and so vast a stage that the artists were continually losing themselves behind the scenes. The first play of the festival week was "Julius Cæsar," with Lawrence Barrett, John McCullough, and James E. Murdoch in the cast. The second performance was "The Hunchback," with the following artists:

Master Walter	.	.	Mr. JOHN McCULLOUGH.
Sir Thomas Clifford	.	Mr. LAWRENCE BARRETT.	
Modus	.	Mr. NAT GOODWIN.	
Master Hartwell	.	Mr. B. G. RODGERS.	
Fathom	.	Mr. CHARLES PLUNKETT.	
Lord Tinsell	.	Mr. FRANK LITTLE.	
Master Wilford	.	Mr. F. C. MOSELY.	
Gaylove.	.	Mr. H. C. BARTON.	
Thomas.	.	Mr. E. WILSON.	
Servant	.	Mr. HOMER HOPE.	
Julia	.	Miss MARY ANDERSON.	
Helen	.	Miss KATE FORSYTHE.	

As was expected, with scenery worked on so large a scale, several accidents occurred. The entire "drop" fell in front of me when I first stepped on the stage. Had I been a moment sooner, it would have struck me, and so put an end to the English contract, with all its fears and worries. As it was, no harm was done, and, stepping over the mass of wood and canvas, I proceeded with the play. There was something al-




most alarming in the great sea of faces that met one's gaze. Being so far from the stage, the public was provided with books of the play, and it was difficult not to be distracted by the rustle of so many thousand turning leaves. The fourth performance was "Much Ado About Nothing," with Lawrence Barrett as Benedick, John Ellsler as Dogberry, and Mlle. Rhea as Beatrice. "Othello" was given with the following cast:

Duke of Venice . . .	Mr. H. A. LANGDON.
Brabantio . . .	Mr. B. G. RODGERS.
Gratiano . . .	Mr. CHARLES ROLFE.
Ludovico . . .	Mr. PERCY WINTER.
Montano . . .	Mr. H. C. BARTON.
Othello . . .	Mr. JOHN MCCULLOUGH.
Cassio . . .	Mr. JOHN A. LANE.
Iago . . .	Mr. LAWRENCE BARRETT.
Roderigo . . .	Mr. FRANK LITTLE.
Julio . . .	Mr. E. WILSON.
Paulo . . .	Mr. ERROLD DUNCAN.
Marco . . .	Mr. LINNEY.
Antonio . . .	Mr. ALBERT T. RIDDLE.
A Messenger . . .	Mr. HOMER COPE.
Desdemona. . .	Miss MARY ANDERSON.
Emilia. . .	Miss CLARA MORRIS.

The character of Desdemona had been carefully studied; but having never seen the play or acted in it, I knew nothing of the stage business, and resolved not to think of situations, exits, and

entrances until the rehearsals. Mr. Barrett had directed "Cæsar" and I the "Hunchback." It was now Mr. McCullough's turn, for on such occasions a certain etiquette is always observed; but he was already suffering from the illness that eventually killed him, and refused. Consequently, during our one rehearsal we had no direction at all. Seeing the dire confusion that must follow such a state of affairs, and not having the faintest idea where to look for any of the characters in their entrances and exits, I turned to Miss Morris for help. She was quite as much in the dark as I, knowing nothing of what McCullough and Barrett usually did; but, having just returned from a tour with Salvini, she proposed that we should follow his directions. This was more confusing than ever; and in desperation we resolved to "trust to luck"—a dangerous thing to do before an audience of eight thousand persons. The result of that slipshod rehearsal was nearly disastrous. Whenever Desdemona remarked that her lord was coming from one side, he invariably appeared in the opposite direction, thus giving the audience to understand that Desdemona had eyes in the back of her head. In one scene Miss Morris and I were together upon the stage. The cue




had been given for Othello to enter, but he did not appear. To fill in the awkward pause that followed, I remarked, "Here comes my noble lord!" Another pause! but no Moor in sight. Miss Morris, equal to the occasion, said, after another wait, "I will go and seek the Moor," thus leaving me quite alone upon the vast stage during a suspense of nearly three minutes, which seemed as many hours. Fortunately I had a piece of embroidery in my hand, and there I sat, smiling inanely, and trying to appear as though the situation were enjoyable. Either the audience felt for me, or grew weary of the long silence, for in the midst of it they burst into applause which I took as a reward for my patience. The stillness after that grew oppressive, and was becoming unbearable, when at last I saw Miss Morris with Othello in tow. Springing to my feet and flinging away the embroidery, I cried, with transport, "Oh, be praised, ye heavens, here comes the noble Moor at last!" Having quite forgotten the scene (McCullough was changing his dress for the next act), his entrance was precipitate and confused, and it was some time before we regained our composure. Poor Desdemona! what trials she passed through that night! During the second and last perform-




ance of "Othello," when she had herself kept the stage waiting, and, after divers woes, had been comfortably smothered in her bed, thanking Heaven that the performance was safely at an end, and inwardly vowing never to appear in that character again, suddenly she was nearly lamed by a terrible blow across her ankles. It was the good (*and heavy*) sword of Othello, who in his agony of grief had flung it upon the bed. Such a hurt would be bad enough even if one were able to dance about and scream with pain; but to lie quite still without a quiver, "that was the most unkindest cut of all!" I have never played that character since.

"Hamlet" was given on Friday, with James E. Murdoch as the melancholy prince, John McCullough as the Ghost, Lawrence Barrett as Horatio, John E. Ellsler as Polonius, Louis James as Laertes, and Miss Wainwright as Ophelia. "Romeo and Juliet" followed, with Mr. Barrett as Romeo (he was greatly amused at himself in the character, saying that his age fitted him better than the part, though he not only looked but acted it admirably), John McCullough as Mercutio, and myself as Juliet. The week finished with the second performance of "Othello." Financially, I believe, the Festival was a success, though it was far from



being artistically perfect. "Star" performances generally draw the public, who go out of curiosity to see several favorites together; but they are rarely, if ever, satisfactory. "Stars" are kings and queens in their own companies, forming and carrying out conceptions not only of their own but of other characters. A combination of several of these small monarchs is generally inharmonious, each getting his effects in his own way, and finding it impossible, for lack of sufficient rehearsal under one head, to sink his individual ideas even for the benefit of a perfect whole.

Our summer home was at that time at Long Branch. We had been compelled to leave Louisville years before, to be near New York, the centre of all things theatrical. In the winter we were homeless, wandering from place to place, with no hint of rest or comfort. That year, instead of enjoying the quiet of a beautiful spring by the sea, we hurried abroad.



CHAPTER VIII


WHILE on my way to England—to a new chapter in my stage life—I could not help reviewing the old one, of eight years, which I had just finished. The retrospect brought as much pain as pleasure. The chief good my work had accomplished, I felt, was the assurance, verbally and by letter, from many young men and women that the examples of such characters as Parthenia, Ion, and Evadne, in particular, had helped them in their daily lives, and strengthened them in moments of despondency and temptation. Their gratitude to me, as the humble exponent of these *rôles*, was my most valued applause; for it proved that, in a measure, I had fulfilled the vocation, so long ago dreamed of, in undertaking a dramatic career. My efforts had, as a rule, been successful; but the strain of constant travel, the absence of home comforts in the ever-changing hotels, the responsibility of rehearsals, support, stage-management, and, above all, the extreme publicity of the life,

had already begun to be distasteful to me. The disappointments connected with the art itself—the painting one's pictures with one's own person, in the full gaze of the public, the dependence upon inartistic people (often compelled to use the theatre as a trade), for carrying out most cherished conceptions, and the constant crumbling of ideals—made me, young as I was, long to leave the stage for the peace and privacy of a domestic life.

I had a greater desire than ever to work, but *away* from the direct eye of the public. The life of a poet, composer, writer, or painter seemed ideal, for they could express their innermost thoughts and inspirations through the impersonal mediums of canvas, music, literature, and still be protected by that privacy which is so dear to most women.

But it was too late then to change, for many years of labor would have been lost if turned into other channels; all my studies had been directed to the accomplishment of the one end. So I determined to bend all my energies towards perfecting that which I had already begun.

Mr. Abbey had taken the Lyceum for eight months, and having engaged no one but myself to fill the time, he meant to close the theatre in case I failed. The knowledge of this added to my




feeling of responsibility and oppression on arriving in England.

It seemed that Edwin Booth was always to appear in my hours of discouragement as friend and comforter. While resting in Liverpool after our voyage we found him and his daughter on the eve of sailing for America. His sympathy roused my sinking spirits, and gave me new courage to face whatever the future might hold. After his departure we went to Warwickshire.

Though Goethe says that Nature, even in her most smiling mood, has but little power to console or cheer, it has always seemed to me that hills and brooks, trees and sunny landscapes, help to lighten care and soothe the sorrowing heart. At all events, my troubles were then greatly alleviated by the sight of Nature's beaming face.

Our visit to Stratford was especially happy. The Misses Chataway, those charming old ladies who formerly guarded Shakespeare's birthplace with such reverential care, showed us much courtesy, Mr. William Winter's letter serving us as an open sesame to their kind hearts. I was allowed to sit alone in the room where the great bard was born, or to restudy my parts in the solitude of the little chamber where hangs his portrait, and

where as a youth he dreamed his hours away. Those bright spring mornings in the hallowed house, with the scent of sweet Warwickshire flowers blowing in at the open casement, the afternoon walks across the fields to Anne Hathaway's cottage, with the sad note of the cuckoo coming across the shining meadows from some hidden shelter, the chat and cup of tea with the old descendant of the Hathaways while sitting in the chimney-settle, where, no doubt, Shakespeare wooed and won "Sweet Anne," threw over each hour a spell of the olden time, when the Bard of Avon lived and sang and loved; a stroll through the old-fashioned garden, fragrant with sweet lavender, thyme, rosemary, or rue; a look into the dark, shining water of the well that has reflected the face of the great bard himself and the faces of Byron, Scott, Dickens, and a host of others who have made themselves dear to our hearts; then back again across the fields in the gloaming; a word here and there with the townspeople, so full of character and intelligence; a quiet dinner at The Red Horse, filled with memories of Washington Irving; and, to finish the evening, a row in the moonlight by the old church, where the master now "sleeps well." Not a sound but the



dip of the oars, the rustle of the swans following in our wake, and the deep tones of the organ stealing down to us from the church, the glimmer of the organist's lamp through the stained-glass window making a point of soft and varied color in the silver light without.

After lingering as long as possible at Stratford we visited most of the interesting parts of Warwickshire, driving from place to place over those perfect roads so well known and loved by Americans. The delicious, clover-scented air, the garden-like landscape, the long and ambient twilights, our youthful pleasure in everything, made the tour seem like a lovely dream. Yet, as I have since realized, only those who have lived in the country of England can fully appreciate its marked character and beauty.

At Kenilworth we stayed at the humble little cottage which had sheltered Walter Scott, who is said to have gone there to write his great novel under the shadow of the noble ruin. A villager told us, how, as a child, he had seen Sir Walter standing on the knoll near Amy Robsart's window, and how his figure, wrapped in a long cloak, seemed to tower in the moonlight. I shall never forget those days and nights: all peace and har-




mony, no rush, no mad effort for gain; time for thinking, dreaming, communing with one's self, and for realizing how much of what one had taken on trust had sunk into one's nature. Then to be living where the great dead had lived—those who have filled our minds and hearts with the glory of their genius; to walk in the meadows they had traversed, to sit under the trees that had sheltered them, to wander through the cloisters of the old churches where they rest, gave one almost a feeling of intimacy with those who had before seemed so distant and inaccessible. Truly, the delights and interests of the old world to a child of the new are legion.

After the fresh, bright country life it was very depressing to go into dark, smoky London. My heart sank low as we drove to our hotel, for I knew that in three months' time I should have to face that public which looked so cold and indifferent as it surged through the crowded thoroughfares.

Being lonely and despondent, and having no friends in London, we spent our evenings at the theatres. Our first visit was to the St. James's to see "Impulse." When Mrs. Kendal came upon the stage, her radiant smile, her beautiful hair

simply arranged, and no shadow of "make-up" or artificiality about her, I thought her one of the most charming women I had ever seen on the boards. Her admirable acting was as free from the theatrical as her appearance. The Lyceum struck me as being a very gloomy house, not nearly so bright or attractive as Booth's, McVicker's, The Boston, or many of our theatres; but when the curtain rose this sombreness proved a decided advantage to the stage pictures. The play was "The Lyons Mail," and I thought it well-nigh as perfect in its acting as in its every detail. Mr. Irving's performance of both characters left nothing to be wished for, and Miss Terry, by her artistic treatment, made the small part of Jeanette important. I was much touched during the play when she slipped into our box, and, in her delightfully informal way, gave me a warm welcome to the theatre in which I was so soon to act. In "Louis XI." Mr. Irving rose to splendid heights, his death scene being one of the most terrible and thrilling pieces of acting I have ever seen. Signor Salvini does Mr. Irving and English-speaking artists an injustice when he says that "from the time when passion assumes a deeper hue, and reason moderates impulses which are forcibly

curbed, Irving seems to me to show mannerism, to be lacking in power, and strained; and it is not in him alone I find this fault, but in all foreign actors. There seems to be a limit of passion within which they remain true in their rendering of Nature, but beyond that limit they become transformed, and take on a conventionality in their intonation, exaggeration in their gesture, and mannerism in their bearing." This certainly could not be said with truth of Irving's Louis, Booth's Richard, Cushman's Meg, or Barrett's Cassius. The performance of "Charles I." was, I thought, admirable. Mr. Irving looked as though he had stepped from Van Dyck's canvas. There was something weird in seeing that well-known and beautiful figure out of its frame, moving about the stage. Miss Terry's Henrietta Maria was as charming as her Portia was dazzling, both in look and manner. "The Silver King" at the Princess, with Mr. Wilson Barrett's fine performance, was so poetically treated that it did not seem like a melodrama. Everywhere we noticed the great care bestowed upon the productions. I felt that I should never be able to mount my play (I feared the theatre would be closed after the first night) in the same finished style.




On going to the Lyceum to arrange the scenery I was surprised to hear that the stage would have to be "set" for the royal box, that it was always done, and that there had better be no exception to the rule. This meant that the stage business would have to be altered so that those in the royal box would miss no point. "But," said I, "I have come here to play to the English public, and not to the royal box. Besides, the royalties may never come to see me." This carried the day, and the scene was set as it had been in America. The rehearsals soon began, and, as a whole, I found the company a superior one. One and all were kind and helpful, and anxious to assist the general effect. Though my name was unknown, they showed me the greatest courtesy. It was surprising to find that London had never heard of many of our prominent American actors unless they had appeared in England.

Mr. Abbey left the choice of bill for the opening nights to me. Mr. Irving wished me to take the scenery he had used in his fine production of "Romeo and Juliet," and begin the season with that play. But I decided on *Parthenia*, as being the simplest character in my *répertoire*, and one in which I could not challenge comparison with




any English favorites, as "Ingomar" had not been done in London for years. When all was in full preparation several managers and critics assured us that it could not succeed, that its old-fashioned sentiment would be received with laughter. But Mr. Abbey trusted in my judgment, and their discouraging predictions did not alter my choice. At the dress rehearsals I hardly recognized the old piece with all its new and beautiful surroundings. After a month of alarms, doubts, and constant dreams of failure, the first night came. The thought that I was about to appear in the land of my greatest dramatic heroine, Sarah Siddons, near the very theatres that had rung with the voices of Garrick, silver-tongued Barry, and Edmund Kean, set my heart beating so that I could hardly stand. The house was full, as is always the case on a first night at the Lyceum. After the applause on my first entrance (I had never received such a long and hearty greeting), I felt that the public of London, so dreaded for months before, had welcomed a stranger in the most friendly spirit. The excitement of the first scenes had evidently weakened me, for in the second act, while weaving garlands for the golden cups, a kindly voice from the pit



called out: "Mary, please speak up a bit!" This was said with such good feeling that it put an end to my nervousness, and from that moment the play ran smoothly to the end. Every point was received with enthusiasm, and even those who had been so prejudiced against the old-fashioned sentiment voted it a great and instant success.

Among the many who came behind the scenes to offer their congratulations was Mr. P. T. Barnum, who exclaimed, in his own hearty way, "Hurrah for America! You've won London, or I know nothing of public taste!" Every one seemed unaffectedly pleased at the success of an American girl. The work of an evening and the generous appreciation of a kind public had changed the darkest apprehension into brightest hope for the future.




CHAPTER IX

THE Lyceum season, beginning in September, lasted nearly eight months—a few weeks for “Ingomar” and “The Lady of Lyons,” and the remaining time for “Pygmalion and Galatea.” The houses were always crowded to overflowing.

The comfort of a cosy room at the theatre, a permanent home to welcome one after the night's work, no railway journeys, and no hotel life were luxuries hitherto unknown in my stage career. It seemed too good to last.

Our first home in London was in Maida Vale—a bright, cheerful place, with high walls enclosing a pretty garden. To me this shady nook, with its brilliant flowers, was delightful. No sound of the outer world seemed to enter there, and, with the exception of a distant church-spire, one could see only the trees, shrubs, and garden walls. It was an easy walk from our house to the Paddington parish church-yard, and we often strolled there, before going to the Lyceum,



in the evening to place a few flowers upon the neglected grave of the great Sarah Siddons. It was late in the autumn of 1883. Londoners will recall the series of exceptionally fine sunsets of that year. The brilliant orange and crimson in the west, a silver crescent in the pale, turquoise sky, the crisp, white snow covering the ground and frosting the large tree over the tomb of the great actress, the yellow light of the lonely lamp hanging in the entrance to the church-yard, seemed to accentuate the desolation of the spot. The grave looked almost as uncared for as the sunken-in earth covering poor Haydon, the master of Landseer and friend of Wordsworth and Leigh Hunt, who sleeps in a suicide's grave hard by. The only sound to be heard there was the distant hum of the city or the barking of some stray dog. To leave that sad spot, where the greatest of England's actresses lies forgotten, in order to act before a brilliant and enthusiastic audience, seemed a mockery to my poor efforts; but it taught me of how little value is the greatest of earthly fame. I am glad to say that the Siddons Memorial has since then removed the reproach that rested on her lonely grave.

We made many interesting expeditions from




Maida Vale into "Dickens land," Mr. Laurence Hutton and Dr. E. B. Martin, who had exhaustively studied the ground, taking us into all the quarters of London which the great novelist had described in his various works. It was like a dream to find ourselves in the veritable Old Curiosity Shop, and to be asked by its occupants to take tea under the roof that had sheltered Little Nell and her grandfather. Snagsby's house, still occupied by a law stationer, was recognized at once, and we were fortunate enough to see a "Guster" at the window. Crook's shop, with little Miss Flite's window above; Tulkinghorn's room, with the staring Roman on the ceiling, who looked down upon him after the fatal bullet of Hortense had ended his life; the graveyard whose muddy steps Little Joe had kept clean out of gratitude to the stranger who had been "werry good" to him, and many other places made familiar by the genius of Dickens were visited. On one occasion we had an unconventionally pleasant luncheon at the old White Hart, mentioned by Jack Cade in Shakespeare's "Henry VI.," where the pretty housemaid in "Pickwick" called down to Sam Weller to "'urry up them 'Essians." Another time we passed through



the streets where Dr. Johnson had walked, rattling his stick along the area railings, returning to touch any he had missed; and into the gardens where the Lancaster and York roses were plucked, the comparative antiquity of everything adding a delightful novelty to all we saw.

We soon left our little house in Maida Vale for a larger one in Cromwell Road, which, alas! had no garden, and in consequence never grew dear to me. It was there I first met Wilkie Collins. He was "completely out of the world," to quote his own words, and preferred coming to us *en famille*, thus enabling us to have him quite to ourselves, and at his best. His anecdotes of Thackeray, Dickens, and Charles Reade were far more interesting than anything we could have read concerning them; for, in recounting his reminiscences, he added to them his own personal magnetism. His description of Reade laying his head upon his shoulder and crying at the funeral of Dickens, and his own feeling of desolation when, in turn, he, the last of the quartette, stood at the grave of Reade, were pathetic in the extreme. A great sufferer from gout in the eyes, he was forced to seek relief in opium. It was un-

der its potent influence, he told me, that he invented the *dénouement* of "The Moonstone." "I could find no amanuensis," he said, "to take down my dictation uninterruptedly, for at every paroxysm of pain they would invariably stop work to come to my assistance. Finally a young girl was found who wrote on steadily in spite of my cries. To her I dictated much of the book, the last part largely under the effects of opium. When it was finished I was not only pleased and astonished at the *finale*, but did not recognize it as my own." The effect of the drug, though it soothed the pain, excited him greatly, for he acknowledged that under its influence, when going up to his room at night, the staircase seemed to him crowded with ghosts trying to push him down. We soon grew to love him and to look forward to his visits. I once praised one of his books. "Ah," he answered, "I am only an old fellow who has a liking for storytelling, nothing more." All of his many letters in my possession are written in the simple way in which he spoke. I give several of them to illustrate his unaffected style. We had often discussed his writing a play for me. The scenario of Act i. was sent, but finding nothing congenial



in the part, I returned it. The subjoined is his answer.*

"90 GLOUCESTER PLACE, PORTMAN SQUARE, W.,

"April 14th, 1885.

"Thank you, dear Mary Anderson, for your letter. You confirm the doubt that I felt when I sent you the sketch of the first act—only as a specimen of the contemplated play—and you express so clearly your ideal of what the dramatic work should be which will attract your sympathies and enable you to do yourself justice that I already understand what is wanted—and I am eager to consult with you as to the details—to ask hundreds of questions and to try if we can together meet the one serious difficulty that I see—*finding a good subject*. If something could be found in *American* history—not connected with wars—I should like it best, because the dramatic writers of the United States have left that field *free*, and I could let my imagination go at a full gallop without the fear of unintentionally trespassing on the literary ground which the dramatists of Europe have so largely occupied. Some suggestive book

* This and the following letters from Mr. Wilkie Collins are reproduced in these pages by kind permission of his literary executor, Mr. A. P. Watt.

to consult must be our first discovery, and we must look back nearly 100 years or we shall be defeated by the *hideous* costume of the beginning of this century.

"If I *can* get to the theatre it is useless to say that I will seize the opportunity. But the weather is terribly against me. I may tell you (between ourselves) that the mischief this time is a deranged condition of the nerves near the heart, and a very slight cause sets in action a terrific pain in the chest and the arms. But I am getting stronger, and the doctor seems to have no fear of the result, with one terrible 'if'—that is to say, 'if I am careful.'

Ever thine,

"WILKIE COLLINS.

"Let me thank you for kindly sending the scenario, which reached me safely yesterday."

In spite of the most intense physical suffering he was one of the cheeriest spirits I have ever met.

Even in the midst of illness he continued to work.

"90 GLOUCESTER PLACE, PORTMAN SQUARE, W.,

"Wednesday, March 11th, 1885.

"DEAR MARY ANDERSON,—May I call to-morrow (Thursday) afternoon at 3.30, if I shall not be in

the way? Illness, nothing but illness, has kept me away. My heart has been running down like a clock that is out of repair. For the last fortnight the doctor has been winding me up again. He is getting on well enough with his repairs, but I have been (medically) intoxicated with sal volatile and spirits of chloroform; the result has been a *new* idea of a ghost story. I am hard at work frightening myself, and trying to frighten the British reader.

“Ever yours,

“WILKIE COLLINS.”

“90 GLOUCESTER PLACE, PORTMAN SQUARE, W.,

“*January 20th, 1888.*

“Mr. Terriss, dear Mary Anderson, is not Romeo. I am Romeo—because I am in sympathy with you. At the time when, by my calculation, you must have been writing your nice little note, I was asking myself at what time in the afternoon I should be most likely to find you at home and disengaged if I put my patch on my weak eye and called at Cromwell House. When may I climb the area railings, with my umbrella in one hand and my guitar in the other, and hope to see Juliet in the balcony (well wrapped up)? In

plain English, will you choose the day and the hour of the afternoon when I shall not be in the way, and ask your brother to send me just a line, which I shall be only too happy to obey? Over and over again I have thought of writing, and have put it off in the hope of being well enough to speak for myself. At last there is nothing the matter but weakness and certain vagaries of the optic nerves, which persist in seeing a pattern of their own making, as black as black lace, in this form :

[Here follows drawing.]

“It might be prettier, might it not? I think it is a reptile of the pre-Adamite period.

“With kindest remembrances to my kind friends at home,

“Always yours affectionately,

“WILKIE COLLINS.”

The play mentioned by Mr. Collins was never finished, though in one of his later letters he still expressed his usual interest in the subject. “I have got Bancroft’s History of the United States,” he said, “and mean to try if I can find a hint in that long book which may suggest something ap-

propriate as a subject, always excluding the 'Puritans,' who have been, in a literary sense (as *you* say on the other side of *our* ocean), 'played out.'"

Not long before his death he was compelled to leave his house in Portman Square, where he had lived for years. On this event he says: "Since I last wrote, my lease at Gloucester Place has expired, and my landlord, the enormously rich Lord ———, asked me such exorbitant terms for allowing me to continue to be his tenant that I confronted the horror of moving in my old age." A short time after this he died. From our first meeting we were in constant intercourse, and I have nothing but the sweetest memories of his little bent figure with its great kind heart.

"Pygmalion and Galatea" ran for the greater part of the season, preceded by "A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing." During the rehearsals of the former I was frequently told that my reading of the character would not be tolerated by the London public. Galatea, the child of Pygmalion's art, a statue, come to life, could not, it seemed to me, think, look, stand, or speak like an earthly-born maiden; some remnant of the inanimate marble would inevitably linger about her, giving to her movements a plastic grace, and to her thoughts and

their expression a touch of the ethereal. Mr. Gilbert did not agree with my conception of the classic meaning of Galatea's character—which seemed to me its strongest and most effective side—saying that the play was a nineteenth-century comedy dressed in Greek costume, “which,” he added, “is the only classic thing about it.” I had undertaken the part on condition that I should act it according to my own ideas; and painful and embarrassing as it was for me not to be versatile enough to carry out the brilliant author's wish that Galatea should speak certain comic speeches with a visible consciousness of their meaning, I felt convinced that my only hope of success was to stamp every word, look, tone, and movement with that ingenuousness which seemed to me the key-note of her nature. Another trouble during the dress rehearsals was my pose for the statue. My friend, Mr. Alma-Tadema, had suggested that I should be draped after some of those lovely Tanagra figurines; and he was good enough to arrange my draperies himself, going with Mr. Gilbert into the stalls to see the effect. The author insisted that Galatea looked like a stiff mediæval saint; so the Tanagra idea was abandoned. At the last full-dress rehearsal matters grew worse.

Pose after pose was tried, but the judges in front had something to say against each. I went to my dressing-room on the eventful night in tears; but, dashing them aside, I resolved to make my own statue in my own way. Though it was already six o'clock, my mother bought and hastily made the drapery which was necessary for the new effect. In my white Greek clothes, with swollen eyes and tear-stained face, I worked for an hour before the long mirror, when suddenly the statue that I wanted stood before me. The audience received it with round after round of applause, and Mr. Gilbert acknowledged himself satisfied with his new Galatea. This success I thought was deserved not for any excellence on my part, but because of the suffering I had undergone during the many rehearsals. When driving to and from the theatre I had often envied the old women sweeping the street crossings.

Wishing to discard "A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing" and get a one-act play from the author of the "Bab Ballads," in order to have a complete Gilbert bill, we induced him to give us his powerful little piece entitled "Comedy and Tragedy," which had not yet been acted. The fine speech of Clarisse describing what an actor is did not

belong to the play. This had been written some time before by Mr. Gilbert, who introduced it into "Comedy and Tragedy" with great effect. The little whirlwind in one act took the audience by storm.

The following letter from Wilkie Collins tells how the play affected him:

"90 GLOUCESTER PLACE, PORTMAN SQUARE, W.

"DEAR MISS ANDERSON,—I resist the temptation to call to-day, because I dare not interfere with the hours of rest which must be especially precious to you, I am sure, after the strain laid on you by the exertions of last night. Let me try to express my gratitude and the gratitude of the ladies who were with me on a later afternoon. Only let me have (liberally) two lines. One line to say, I hope and trust, that you have had a good night, and are feeling better to-day; and one line to choose your own afternoon at four o'clock (or later, if it will be more convenient) for letting me call and make the attempt to tell you of the strong impression that your acting produced on me. I will only say now that the subtlety and delicacy, the perfect grace and feeling, of the *Galatea* did not in the least prepare me for the

magnificent burst of passion and power in the second character.* If I had been dropped suddenly into the box at the moment when you hear the cry in the garden, and had been taken out of it again a minute afterwards, I should have said to myself, 'I have seen *a born artist*.' Perhaps the best criticism I can offer will be to report that (during the last half of the piece) my hands were as cold as ice, and my heart thumped as if it would fly out of me. With more thanks than I can express,

"Always truly yours,

" WILKIE COLLINS.

" P. S.—The fifth of April is registered as a 'Festival' in my calendar."

Those who have seen the play will remember that in one scene Clarisse, under great excitement, has suddenly to stop and gain her composure as she hears the approaching carriages of the guests—the Duc d'Orléans, the Abbé Dubois, and the usual crowd of courtiers of the profligate Regency. "Hark!" she says, "I hear the wheels of their carriages." We obtained the effects of approaching

* Clarisse.

wheels, but, try as we would, the stamping of the horses' feet upon the gravel before Clarisse's door we could not manage. At last a brilliant idea struck me, which the stage-manager promptly endorsed. It was that we should have in a donkey from Covent Garden to trot up and down behind the scenes on the gravel especially laid for him. We were decidedly nervous on the first appearance of our four-footed friend, whose *rôle* was to counterfeit the high-stepping horses of the brilliant French court. When his cue was given there was only an ominous silence. I repeated the word in a louder voice, when such a braying and scuffling was heard as sent the audience into roars of laughter. Although it was one of the most serious situations of the play, I could not help joining in their mirth until the tears rolled down my cheeks. That was the greatest lesson I ever had against too much realism.

The success of the season continuing, Mr. Abbey offered me the following year at the Lyceum, which was accepted.

It was about this time that I met Robert Browning at a party, when he happened to be surrounded by many who were congenial to him. He took me in to dinner, and my first impression

of him was that he resembled one of our old-school Southern country gentlemen more than my ideal of England's mystic poet. There was a kind of friendly chattiness in his conversation, more agreeable, I thought, than distinguished. I should have named any of the men at table sooner than he as the author of "Rabbi Ben-Ezra" and "Pippa Passes." We met frequently after that at the houses of common friends. He was always at his best in the studio of some favorite artist. His fearlessly enthusiastic appreciation of anything beautiful, whether famous or unknown, was one of his greatest characteristics. On one occasion I saw him stretch his hand across a luncheon-table to greet a young artist who has since sprung into fame. "Are you Mr. ——?" he asked. "Sir, you are a genius, and I am proud to shake you by the hand." Another instance of his great talent of appreciation was told me by himself. "Bulwer," said he, "asked me to go to hear him read his new play, 'Richelieu,' requesting that I should take a blank card upon which to write my criticism. On arriving at the place of rendezvous I found Charles Dickens and Thackeray, if I remember rightly, as well as Macready and several



others, all similarly armed with paper and pencil. When Bulwer had finished I immediately handed him my card with '*A great play!*' written on it. So you see I was the first to pronounce judgment on 'Richelieu.'" Speaking of "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon," he asked if I thought it would succeed in America, as Lawrence Barrett was then negotiating for it. I told him it ought to make an effective short play. "I disagree with you," he replied; "the theatre-going people of to-day want plenty of action and not so much talk."*

Browning was always charming, often amusing in conversation, but personally he never appealed to me as much as either Longfellow or Tennyson. Perhaps this was because I frequently saw the last two in their own homes, whereas my acquaintance with Browning was a society one, which least of all reveals the deep, earnest, or best side of any character.

Count Gleichen informed me, during the run of "Galatea," that the Princess of Wales had expressed a wish to have him do a bust of me, for which he requested sittings. I was delighted

✓ | * Dion Boucicault likewise said, "Whenever you see particularly fine poetry in dramatic work stab it with your pencil, or it will kill your play."

to give them, for, in the several interviews with which she had honored me, the charming personality, lovely face, and sweet manner of the princess had completely captivated me. Count Gleichen's studio was in St. James's Palace, and the many mornings spent there were a rest and an enjoyment. Though not considered by artists to be in the front rank, some of his work has been sincerely admired, notably his bust of Lord Beaconsfield, which he told me he had great difficulty in making; for while sitting to him the eminent statesman continually fell asleep, would awaken with a start, converse with animation for a few moments, and then fall to nodding again. Artists often get their best effects under distracting circumstances. Though I did not fall asleep, and gave the count, afterwards Prince Hohenlohe, no apparent trouble, his bust of me did not please my relations and friends, and when exhibited at the Royal Academy failed to excite any particular attention.

I shall always owe a debt of gratitude to my profession for opening to me the doors of the artistic and literary world of London. What a charming and helpful world it is! Besides, there were innumerable other aids to progress in my new sur-



roundings: the British Museum, the public galleries, the magnificent collections of art treasures in the country-houses we visited from Saturday till Monday; the continued opportunities of hearing the best music well rendered; constant contact with original minds of different nations, and, above all, ample time to digest everything that was seen, heard, or felt. Such outward influences spurred me on to renewed efforts, and the improvement in my work, I was told, was steady and rapid.

It was about this time that the sad death of the Duke of Albany occurred. The remembrance of that occasion has always been most painful to me. The Lyceum was not under my management at the time, and the pressure brought to bear upon me to act *Galatea* on the night of the funeral—my last appearance that season—added to the fatigue of many consecutive months of arduous work, made me so ill and nervous that my physician pronounced me unfit to appear. The theatre doors were therefore closed on that night of general mourning.

CHAPTER X

AFTER the season's hard work we greatly enjoyed a holiday at Rochester. This interesting town, as all lovers of Dickens know, is the Cloisterham of "Edwin Drood." On our first visit to the cathedral and its picturesque close we were interested to hear from an old verger that Dickens had drawn many of the characters of "Edwin Drood" from people inhabiting the town. "Why," said he, "I 'ave seen Jasper; 'e lived in that 'ouse. And Durdles! I've seen 'im drunk and scolloping him and hout them crypt columns many a time; while I" (here he seemed to swell with pride), "I am Tope!" Tope, as we all know, dropped his "h's" generously. It was as curious to be standing face to face with a Dickens character as to take tea afterwards at Rosa Bud's house.

Watts's sensible charity, "The Six Travellers," touched me deeply. It was pathetic to watch at sunset the wayworn men approaching one by one from various quarters, seeking food and a night's

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shelter in the clean, cheerful little house provided for them several hundred years before: six white beds, six covers on the snowy deal table, six baths for the weary feet, all awaiting with a seeming welcome the homeless wanderers who might present themselves at nightfall. It was doubly sad to see those who exceeded this number hopelessly turn away. We were told by people in the town that Dickens would often order excellent dinners from The Bull for the six travellers, and sit down with them, finding, no doubt, among their number many a profitable character-study. We received much courtesy from the occupants of Gad's Hill. The walls of the library were as Dickens had left them. The doors painted by him to represent book-shelves completed in appearance the tiers of volumes around the entire room. The titles on the sham tomes were likewise of his own invention: among them, "A History of the Middling Ages," in many volumes; "Has a Cat Nine Lives?" "Was Shakespeare's Mother's Hair Red?" etc.

From Rochester we went to Canterbury. It is impossible to describe my first impression in the cathedral while listening to the great "Amen" surging through the curtained grille of the choir and filling the air with melody. We afterwards

wandered through the stately nave "by the pale moonlight," and it was even grander then—the beauties discovered by day mystified by the shadows of night, and around us that serenity that marks the sleep of centuries. It was near Canterbury I first heard the skylarks, those "blithe spirits" that Shelley so loved, "singing while they soar, soaring while they sing." That fresh country life took from me for the moment the memory of the glare and noise, the glitter and excitement that had for so many years surrounded me. The old feeling of discontent with the practice of my art came back with redoubled force, and my inborn love of retirement grew more and more imperative.

"To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,
And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been.

* * * * *

This is not solitude, 'tis but to hold
Converse with Nature's charms, and see her stores un-
rolled."



CHAPTER XI

ACTORS and orators have pre-eminently the power of discovering the characteristics of any audience they address ; playing upon their hearers as a musician plays upon an instrument, touching the chords of their deepest sympathy and enthusiasm. I observed that the English provincial audiences, either through timidity or self-consciousness, laughed and wept in a very conservative manner. Between the large manufacturing towns of England and those of the United States there was a marked similarity in the theatre-going public. The Irish audiences, on the contrary, gave full and often reckless rein to their emotions, interrupting any point that pleased them before it was completed, and cheering until one feared for their throats. Nor was this all ; for after the most violent transports during the play they invariably had energy enough left to sing between the acts, and applaud that impromptu entertainment. Yet with all their indiscrimination how one grew to

love the uncommon kindness of heart that prompted such generous appreciation ! The Irish are as fascinating *en masse* as they are individually—spontaneous, animated, hospitable, and warmly sympathetic. As an illustration of their impetuosity, I may mention how, in Dublin, they took the horses from our carriage every night, and dragged it through the streets. This in itself is not extraordinary ; but on one night in particular I doubt if, outside of Dublin, any landau ever held so many shrieking enthusiasts : the driver's box occupied by three or four of them, one on each of the carriage steps, dozens pushing it from behind, dozens pulling it in front, the top literally swarming with them ; while from the crowd that rushed after our strange-looking vehicle came deafening cries of " Hurrah for America ! " " The Sthars and Sthroipes for iver ! " " God bless our Mary ! " while Mary sat inside, fearfully listening to every creak of the roof, and expecting it each moment to fall in with its kind-hearted though heavy-weighted devotees. Finally one of the steps lost its occupant for an instant, and, no longer able to bear the ever-growing anxiety, I put my head out of the window. The sight of the surging crowd on all sides rushing after us was

alarming; but when I saw the squad of policemen—hired nightly to keep clear a passageway from the theatre door to the carriage—running along with the throng, I could not refrain from laughing. However, the sounds from above were growing more and more ominous, and, throwing aside all shyness, I cried out at the top of my voice, "Please be careful! I fear the roof of the carriage is breaking in." A deep and reassuring voice from above answered, "It's all roight, Miss Anderson; you're in the hands of the Oirish mob, and they'll protict yer with thimsilves." Some of the Dublin students who were in the crowd assured us there was no cause for alarm, and we continued our journey through the streets in a calmer state of mind.

At the theatre the people were as wilful as enthusiastic. I have always thought it an inartistic interruption to take a "call" during the progress of a scene, and refused on one occasion to respond to the clamor. This was before I knew that public's arbitrary ways. Three times the entire scene was repeated by my colleagues without a word being heard, so vociferous were the calls for my return. Finding that they refused to allow the play to go on, I was compelled to put my pride in

my pocket and bow my acknowledgments, thus stepping out of the picture and spoiling the action of the piece.

Their ingenuity was astonishing. To send a basket of flowers from the upper gallery they would manage somehow to attach a rope from that point to the stage (making the theatre appear as though a tight-rope act was to be a part of our performance), and down this would slide baskets filled with pretty wild-flowers and sugar birds. I have even known a living dove to be tied in one of these baskets, which came swinging down over the heads of the stall occupants amid yells of delight from the gallery.

While travelling through the provinces we had to find in each town the fifty or more supernumeraries necessary for our various productions. These were chosen from the ranks; and the types of lower-class Irishmen impersonating the noble Italian patricians of the houses of Montague and Capulet were often ridiculous. In the first act of "Romeo and Juliet" both these factions, armed with swords, meet in the street and engage in a desperate fight. At one of the rehearsals we observed a rather timid Hibernian, with a very short nose and long upper lip, who seemed so alarmed




at the possibility of being hit by his opponent's sword, that even before it had crossed his own he invariably fell stiffly upon the stage. He was told that he was not to drop dead until he had been struck; but he continued doing so, and finally, losing his head entirely, ran wildly upon the stage and fell before the fight had even begun. The stage manager's angry "There's that infernal corpse again!" put an abrupt end to Pat's engagement.

The Edinburgh public is free from the indiscriminate enthusiasm of the Irish, and yet never falls into the constraint and formality of the provincial English theatre-goers. It was to me the most delightful of all audiences: always attentive, breathlessly silent during the development of a situation, waiting not only until the climax was reached, but until it was finished, before bursting into a recognition as spontaneous as it was intelligent. They gave their tears as generously as their laughter, and it was not only a pleasure but a help and an incentive to one's best efforts to appear before them. As half of a poem lies with the reader, so half of an actor's effects lies with his audience, and often the best half.

The historic and romantic interest attached to

Edinburgh, apart from its rare beauty, makes it particularly attractive. We were invited to Holyrood Palace by the then Lord High Commissioner, and through his kindness were enabled to wander through its interesting rooms, so full of memories of Mary Stuart and Rizzio, without the usual crowd of tourists. To me the most touching of all the relics there is the small Venetian mirror which had reflected the lovely face of Mary. It is so cracked and blurred now that in it one can hardly see one's own. Poor Queen! so tortured in life, so maligned in death! I have always found a keen satisfaction in observing the expression of those who, quitting her monument in the Abbey, seemed moved with pity at the memory of her sufferings and ignominious death; while Elizabeth, sleeping in her pomp and state, apparently arouses no sympathy from those who coldly gaze upon the hardened features carved upon her tomb.

"Romeo and Juliet" was the play decided on for the approaching London season. It was at Mrs. Humphry Ward's house that, meeting James Russell Lowell for the first time, I mentioned to him our proposed trip to Verona in quest of sketches and local data for that production, in-



forming him that I had never been to Italy before. "What!" he exclaimed; "going into that glorious country for the first time, and in the flush of youth! I am selfish enough to envy you." The conversation which followed between Henry James and Mr. Lowell made me all the more eager to start for the land of sunshine and song. Mr. Lowell as an after-dinner speaker was justly renowned. I had the privilege of hearing him once. It was at Pembroke College, Cambridge, where Mr. and Mrs. Edmund Gosse had taken me to see the unveiling of Thornycroft's beautiful bust of the poet Gray. Mr. and Mrs. Alma-Tadema were with us. We were a happy party, and Mr. Tadema's appreciation of the beauty of the country in its fresh spring garb made us see many charming effects of light and color which otherwise would have passed unnoticed. The Master of Pembroke, whose guests we were to be overnight, showed us several Gray relics, among them his "Common-book." This contained the poet's admirable drawings of the various fish and insects he had studied, and descriptions of them in his own handwriting, which was beautifully clear. The bust was placed near the seat that Gray had occupied at table. Of all the speeches on that

I

occasion the eloquence of Lowell impressed me most. My pride in the success of my distinguished countryman caused me to burst into applause at an inopportune moment. He spoke with charm and elegance; there was heart in every word and tone, and a power that swept his auditors along with him. Next morning at breakfast I had the opportunity of hearing Lord Houghton at his best. I could hardly believe him to be the same person I had conversed with the afternoon before, when he showed a certain lassitude that seemed natural to him. He was rightly noted for his delightful table-talk at the morning meal. Apart from a certain glow of humor which colored all he said, I was struck particularly by the rapidity with which he flew from one subject to another, leaving everything he had touched complete.

While resting in Paris before proceeding southward I had a charming interview with Victor Hugo in his own house. As the door opened and he entered the room I was greatly impressed by an atmosphere of power that seemed to surround the short, thick-set man with stubbly white hair and piercing eyes. His welcome was cordial, his manner full of that charm and courtesy which

mark the gentleman of the old school. Among the many subjects touched upon he spoke enthusiastically of "*les belles Américaines*," whom he placed beside "*les Françaises*" for grace and beauty. During our conversation he kissed my hand several times in the French fashion, and I noticed that he always brought it to his lips, never stooping to meet it. I laughingly mentioned this to an intimate friend of his. "*Ah*," said he, "*mon ami ne baisse pas la tête même pour les Américaines*." Monsieur Hugo kindly asked us to prolong our stay for a reception at his house a few nights later, when he promised that we should meet all the interesting people in Paris. But visions of Italy rose up before me, and I was not tempted. He gave me his photograph, signing his name at the bottom. It was sad to see the master hand that had written "*Les Misérables*" shaking so painfully over his own signature.

We arrived at Verona on a bright Saturday afternoon, when the quaint streets and beautiful Adige were flooded with golden light. Apart from its associations with Juliet and her Romeo, its arena, Giusti Gardens, Scaligeri monument, beautiful churches, monasteries, and most picturesque of market-places, the old city has an irre-

sistible atmosphere of romance hanging over it. In speaking of Italy with the late Lord Tennyson on our return I was delighted to hear him grow more enthusiastic over Verona than over the other more famous and familiar cities of that lovely country. We were fortunate enough to find an excellent Neapolitan artist, who accompanied us and sketched the places we chose for our forthcoming production. His vivid studies proved of great service. My one and only disappointment was Juliet's tomb—a palpably spurious stone coffin, half filled with visiting-cards of English and American tourists. These occupied the place of poor Juliet, who, let us hope, is quietly sleeping in her happily unknown grave somewhere in the Campo Santo. One expected to see, if not the "monument of pure gold" Shakespeare speaks of, at least a worthy sarcophagus for his sweet heroine. The empty coffin would in itself have been disenchanting, but when the names of Smith, Brown, and Robinson, to say nothing of innumerable Tompkinses and Joneses, stared up impertinently into one's face, the effect was intolerable.

Claude Melnotte's description of the "deep vale, shut out by Alpine hills from the rude world, near a clear lake margined by fruits of gold and whis-


pering myrtles," made the Lake of Como, which we next visited, decidedly disappointing. His rhapsodies were misleading to Pauline, or perhaps had wrought her expectations to too high a pitch. At any rate I found Maggiore far more beautiful.

On our return to London we went night after night to the different theatres in quest of actors for the cast of "Romeo and Juliet." It is a difficult thing nowadays to select a suitable company for the legitimate drama. Nothing but pantaloon plays were to be seen. However excellent an artist may be in these he is often at sea in costume parts, where he has no trouser-pockets for his hands, no mantel-shelves to pose against, and no cigarette to tide him over rough places. It is a simple matter to don classic or mediæval clothes, but not so easy to wear them well. This, however, is the least part of their trouble, for those who are glib with "By Jove, my boy," and the like, stumble more hopelessly over their blank-verse than over their swords and flowing draperies.

An extravagant production has always seemed to me to draw as much attention from the acting as a shabby one. My ambition was to have the stage in such good taste and balance with the play and epoch as to attract no particular notice


to itself: like a well-dressed woman, whose clothes never catch the eye. Unfortunately, little by little, and almost unconsciously, I was led into a lavish production of "Romeo and Juliet," which caused me infinite trouble, and took up so much of my time that I had none left for restudying my own part. The Hon. Lewis Wingfield designed the costumes, and Mr. O'Connor painted several of the principal scenes. This artist, having lived in Verona and painted many of its chief beauties, was admirably fitted to undertake the work, and some of his sets were as beautiful as anything I have seen upon the stage. Before the rehearsals began I was asked, in good faith, whether the Irving, Garrick, or Shakespeare version of the play would be followed. This reminded me that years before I had the bad taste to present David Garrick's arrangement of the last act, in which he makes Juliet awaken immediately after Romeo has swallowed the fatal draught, and introduces a scene between them. Riper judgment, however, taught me that Shakespeare knew better when he made Romeo die before Juliet recovered from the effects of the potion. The late Lord Lytton told me how he had sent his valet to see my performance of Juliet, and how the man

had described his emotions when he saw Romeo swallow the poison. He was tempted, he said, to cry out and awaken Juliet, that she might have one farewell word with her lover before the poison did its fatal work. It is extraordinary what a stage-director Shakespeare is. Study him closely enough, and he will tell even what "business" to use. Besides, his lines were easier for me to memorize than those of any other dramatist. To learn a Shakespeare part I generally read it two or three times, wrote it out as often, and—it was mine. I recall an amusing discussion between Professor Max Müller and a celebrated London physician on the subject of memory. The former remarked that he looked upon me with wonder, "for," said he (and here he pointed to my forehead), "you carry there so many of Shakespeare's thoughts and words." The doctor, overhearing this, quickly answered, "She does nothing of the kind;" whereupon followed a controversy as to where the words were lodged, or whether they were lodged at all. In the end, try as I would to find from what part of my head they did come, I could not remember a single line to illustrate either theory. And yet I have always been blessed with an excellent memory. After giving



up *Ion*, a very long blank-verse part, for three or four years, I once rehearsed it from beginning to end with hardly a slip, not having reread it during all that period.

About this time I began sittings to Mr. G. F. Watts, who had expressed a wish to paint my portrait. He is an admirable talker, and though it interrupted the work, I could never refrain from starting him on some congenial subject. This naturally delayed the progress of the picture, which he worked at off and on for five years. Mr. Gladstone had warned me that it might be so; "for," said he, "Watts is one of the most captivating conversationalists as well as one of the most charming characters I know." I soon found this praise was well deserved. The rare qualities of his mind, the breadth of his views on all subjects, the natural loftiness of his thoughts were as striking as his great simplicity, large-heartedness, and freedom from all prejudice and uncharitableness. I once spoke to him very critically of a painter then arousing considerable attention in London, whose conceptions were often horrible and his treatment of them morbid. Though he visited exhibitions very rarely, Mr. Watts made an expedition to the one in question. At our next meet-



ing I triumphantly asked him if he had not been shocked by what he had seen, and I commented upon the absolute lack of imagination in every canvas exhibited. "Some painters see," he answered; "some feel; some imagine. The greatest do all. This one certainly *sees!*" And that was the only criticism he made. He afterwards told me that this same artist—a foreigner—came to his studio and made many suggestions about his work. Watts's pictures have stamped themselves indelibly upon my mind, notably the great creation in which he represents Love as a rosy Cupid with radiant, outspread wings of rainbow hue, and flowers of gorgeous colors all about him, pleading with the pallid and inflexible figure of Death pushing aside the portal which he vainly tries to guard. Admirable, too, is the conception of Death, represented as a woman of serene and majestic beauty, who fulfils her inexorable mission with such apparent solicitude as to rob her of all the terrors which the conventional and ghastly figure suggests. To have given to the world an emblem so consoling is a work which cannot but inspire the deepest gratitude. This idea of Death, as a friend, came to the eminent artist when he was desperately ill, and when the calm, beautiful

figure seemed ever standing by his side ready to release him from suffering. His portraits, especially of men, are alone enough to have made his fame. It was his remarkable power of giving the very essence of the person painted that suggested to Tennyson the following lines in "Elaine":

"As when a painter, poring on a face,
Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the man
Behind it, and so paints him that his face,
The shape and color of a mind * and life,
Lives for his children, ever at its best
And fullest . . ."

In his studio the "Signor," as his friends are allowed to call Mr. Watts, bears a striking resemblance to the celebrated portrait of Titian. His velvet skull-cap, white pointed beard and dark shining eyes under bushy brows, white ruffles about his wrists and neck, the latter always fastened by a knot of scarlet ribbon, make the likeness truly remarkable. Far from the rush of social life, free from the struggle for

* Mr. ——— had a portrait of Lord Tennyson. The poet took me to see it, and was visibly pleased at my not liking it. "No wonder," said he, pointing to the portrait; "that man has neither a brain nor a soul, and I have both."

money which eventually mars the work of so many artists, never taking an order, thus allowing his genius free scope, refusing titles, wealth, and social homage, he passes his days in the great studio, working out his beautiful dreams, at peace with himself and with the world. It always seemed to me that the spirit of some old master lived again in the earnestness and simplicity of his daily life.

CHAPTER XII

LONG runs, like most things, have their good as well as their bad points. Good, because constant repetition so identifies one with the character impersonated that it becomes second nature to feel and act it. Iteration may in the end make one mechanical, but at least it insures a certain technique which, when inspiration fails, rescues the work from crudity. Joseph Jefferson once told me that, in "The Rivals," he had always gained an effect by pulling off the fingers of his glove separately and deliberately to accentuate certain words, but that under inspiration he would throw technique to the winds, and have the glove off with one jerk. Who that has ever seen his "Bob" can forget those brilliant green gloves, and the fun he got out of them! On the other hand, the evil effects of long runs are indisputable. Prominent among them is a general mental weariness which often causes one to forget the most familiar lines, and turn blankly to the

prompter's box or to some friendly actor for the words. This happened to me several times, notably in "The Winter's Tale," in London, where, after playing it a hundred nights, I had to be prompted in several of Hermione's great speeches. Edwin Booth, during the long run of "Hamlet" at his own theatre, frequently called for the lines. An actor who was in his company told me that Booth turned to him one night, and, with a look of consternation, asked what he was to say next. His mind for the moment had become a blank. The actor gave him the word. Booth began the speech, faltered again, was prompted a second time, but finding it impossible to continue, called out, in a loud voice, "Ring down the curtain!" Many other examples might be cited to show how weary the brain grows after acting the same part six or seven times weekly for one or two hundred consecutive nights, with only the rest of Sunday to distract the mind. Another evil is that, towards the end of a long run, the actor of any heavy or engrossing part is likely to feel the impersonated character and its life slowly dispossessing his own. During the hundred nights of "Romeo and Juliet" at the Lyceum Theatre I became so imbued with the sufferings

of Juliet that I continually spoke of them in my sleep.

My second season in London began with "Pygmalion and Galatea" and "Comedy and Tragedy," which continued until the heavy production of "Romeo and Juliet" was ready. We then closed the theatre for a week to place the massive scenery upon the stage; for this, as well as the company, needed rehearsing. So unwieldy were some of the great "sets" that on the night before the first performance we began a full-dress rehearsal at seven in the evening, and at five in the morning Romeo (Mr. Terriss), Friar Laurence (Mr. Stirling), and Juliet were still sitting in the stalls waiting for the last act to be put up. After another hour's wait, finding that it could not be got ready, we were compelled to forego the death scene. Mr. Wingfield kindly promised to remain and oversee the scene-shifters, and we left the theatre with heavy hearts, convinced that, after our unsuccessful efforts, the play might run on until three or four the next morning. I shall never forget the drive back through the Strand in the chill light of the early dawn, or my visions of the public leaving the theatre from sheer weariness and our finishing the play to empty benches at day-

break. There seemed no chance whatever of success. In such circumstances sleep was impossible. Already tired out in mind and body, I realized how utterly unfit I was for the night's work. Juliet was to be my first Shakespeare character in London, and this made my position all the more distressing. How I longed for the simple scenery of the old days, when the characters were the chief consideration, and the upholsterer and scenic artist very minor adjuncts! But such are the necessary worries that Progress has brought even to the actor—Progress which, to quote what a man of knowledge said to me not long since, is undermining men's brains and filling the lunatic asylums with astonishing rapidity. The dreaded evening arrived, and the curtain was rung up before the usual crowd of critical "first-nighters." The first act went quickly and smoothly, and was received with enthusiasm. But the strain had been too great. After Mrs. Stirling and I had bowed our thanks before the curtain, I burst into tears, and felt I could not continue the play. But the second scene was soon ready, and, still shaking with sobs, I was led to the balcony. The cue was given, and I found myself again before the public. Choking down my tears, I assumed a lovelorn


look, feeling all the while that the audience would think Juliet afflicted with St. Vitus's dance, for I could not control the convulsive movements that shook my frame. How was I to speak? If only Romeo would be slow, and give me time! The cue came all too soon. With a supreme effort I managed to get through my lines with a steady voice. The balcony scene was the success of the play. After that set after set was put up with remarkable rapidity, and by half-past eleven the performance was over without a hitch. It seemed nothing short of a miracle. The play ran for a hundred nights. We found the cumbersome scenery more a drawback than an aid. Mrs. Stirling, that most perfect of Nurses, was wont to say, "Oh, those toppling columns and moving churches and palaces! They always make me feel as though I were in an earthquake." One night a long trap in the floor of the stage, used for some mechanical effects, refused to close. My colleagues and I had to make awkward steps over it, and dared not forget it for an instant for fear of a fall and broken bones. It happened that the Prince and Princess of Wales and the Princesses Louise and Beatrice were present that night, and had from their boxes a perfect view of the large opening

and the workmen under the stage. During the interview with which the royal party afterwards honored me they were kind enough not to mention the embarrassing mishap, though it had ruined the act in which it occurred.

Seldom during my stage-life have I ever been able to say of any performance, "That is my best work." In all my years before the public I have only once been satisfied with my acting of Bianca, once in Ion, never in Perdita, and only once in Hermione. On that occasion—my last season in London—I remember the late judge Baron Huddleston, who seemed to be able to read one's inner feelings, came back and said to me, "You are pleased to-day. You may possibly never act the part like that again. Had you pleaded before me as you did before the king, I should have wept as I have just done, and decided in your favor."

My disappointment at my own efforts on the first night of "Romeo and Juliet" was more painful than any I had ever felt.

An actor is conscious that his work is always judged apart from circumstance; that nervousness, illness, weariness, and the many troubles that beset life, and for a time leave their shadows, are not taken into consideration while his efforts are being



criticised. If his heart is breaking, he must conceal his suffering to assume mirth; and if his gaiety does not seem spontaneous, his auditors will surely put it down to bad acting. They may never have seen him before, and may never see him again; and so will always be under the impression that he is incapable. Most artists are, through anxiety and nervousness, generally at their worst on a first night; and yet it is then that judgment is pronounced upon them. Juliet was received with far more enthusiasm than she deserved. Fortunately, applause does not blind one to one's shortcomings. I knew I had not entered into the character, and was accordingly unhappy and humiliated. I resolved, therefore, to restudy and remodel the part. The result was that in a short time I hardly knew my Juliet; and at the end of the season I found her more deserving of the success she received. My brother Joe, who years before had given up college to adopt the stage, and so be near me, was admirable in looks and acting as the fiery Tybalt. "That young fellow might be a younger Kemble," said John Pettie, R.A., to William Black, as Joe came upon the stage. Mr. Pettie did not even know his name at the time. I had great pride in his success.

During the arduous seasons we spent our Sundays and Mondays in the country. It was a boon, mentally and physically, to get out of town, which to me meant the theatre.

At Brighton, where we visited our friends the William Blacks, the long walks over the downs filled me with strength enough to face another week; and the evenings in that merry home gave me no time to think of work or worry.

At Stoke Poges the inn at which we stopped was so small that it might have been spelled "in," as Tennyson told me the only one at —— was described on the sign when he first went there. It was not far from the Burnham Beeches, and the country surrounding it, aside from its beauty, was full of memories of Gray. Unlike the laughing brilliancy of the French and Italian landscape, there seemed a veil of that "white melancholy" over it that Gray described as hanging over himself, "which, though it never laughs nor even amounts to joy or pleasure, is a good, easy sort of state." And so that was a good, easy sort of country, with a tender, sad atmosphere about it that suggested the character of the poet.

It is strange that the generality of people know Gray principally by his "Elegy." His "Ode on the



Pleasure arising from Vicissitudes," the "Hymn to Adversity," and the "Ode to Spring" say more to me than the celebrated lines written in a country church-yard. The fragment of his tragedy, "Agrip-pina," has such a splendid ring of tragic poetry and dramatic feeling that it inspires regret that he did not finish it. The language is so noble and full of telling effects that it always filled me with a wish to act it.

"Give us a new play!" "Why not do something modern?" had been the cries that met me on all sides from my earliest years upon the stage. I spoke to the late Lord Lytton on the subject during my first season in London, saying that I would be willing to meet these demands if provided with a tragedy from his pen. His extensive acquaintance with the theatres of Spain, Italy, France, and Germany, his intuitive knowledge of and sympathy with human passions and suffering, his comprehension how these could be most efficaciously used for dramatic effect, and his mastery of the English language were rare implements in his hands wherewith to make a fine play. After much discussion he decided to dramatize "La Juive." In due time he handed me one of the strongest pieces I had read for years, possessing the rare

combination of striking situations, literary excellence, and bold character drawing. It had but one weak spot—a serious one—its *dénouement*. As in the opera, the Jewess in this play met her death by being thrown into a boiling cauldron. Such an ending would, we feared, tempt the gallery god to make irreverent remarks about the “potted heroine.” The author finally resolved on doing away with this means of execution, and arranged to use a kind of Iron Virgin of Nuremberg in which to crush poor Rachel. Unfortunately, the managers had made their programme for the season, and refused to produce this work. During my last year upon the stage—having resolved, for certain financial reasons, to act one season more before retiring permanently into a long-dreamed-of seclusion—I had meant to produce “The Foresters,” which Lord Tennyson had put into my hands, “The Cup,” and the above play by Lord Lytton.

The demand for something new was caused, no doubt, by my acting such old-fashioned dramas as “Ingomar,” “The Lady of Lyons,” and “The Hunchback.” The first two were successful in London, and the failure of “The Hunchback” was due to my mistake in trying to modernize the character of Julia. By transforming her into



As Pauline in the "*Lady of Lyons*."
From the Portrait by G. H. Boughton, A. R. A., in the possession
of William Black.



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a conventional society woman I made her as insipid to the public as to myself. After the first week I went back to my old declamatory rendering of the part, having found that many of Knowles's bombastic lines would not bear natural treatment.


It was at the Deanery of Westminster that I met Lord Tennyson for the first time. He had a noble head and presence, but my first feeling was one of keen disappointment, simply because I did not find the laureate exactly what I expected him to be. To form an ideal of any person, thing, or place beforehand is no doubt a mistake; for there is a disturbing surprise in store for one, even if the original surpasses the ideal.

The poet's manner at first struck many as gruff. I felt it so then; though, on knowing him better, I found him one of the kindest and most sympathetic natures. He did not come into the drawing-room after luncheon, for his pipe seemed a necessity to him on all occasions. He sent for me before I left, and during our *tête-à-tête* his manner had so changed as to lead me to believe that his former brusqueness was only due to shyness. Mrs. Gladstone was of the party. Most



of those present kissed the bard's hand as he passed them.

It was at a breakfast at his house in Downing Street that I first met Mr. Gladstone, then Prime Minister. As he came across the room with his hands stretched out in greeting, I could not believe that the fine countenance and magnificent eyes were the same I had seen in the numerous photographs and portraits of the eminent statesman. There was a youthfulness in the face and a fire in the eyes that none of them suggested, while the expression was varying and sympathetic. Without an atom of self-consciousness, his simplicity and charm have forced even his political opponents to admit that "he can be delightful socially." His versatility in conversation was remarkable. He handled every subject with an ease born of deep knowledge. At breakfast I had the pleasure of sitting between him and the late Lord Granville. Mr. Gladstone was speaking amusingly of toys, contrasting the quaint and simple ones of his childhood with the intricate and wonderful playthings of to-day, when, to the horror of all, a loud explosion was heard which seemed to be in the house. Happening at a time when dynamite was being freely used in London,



and Victoria Station had already been partially demolished by a bomb, its effect was naturally terrifying. Mr. Gladstone was the only one of the party who did not show the slightest sign of fear, and went to the scene of the explosion at once. We soon learned that an attempt had been made to blow up the Admiralty near by. On his return Mr. Gladstone, after expressing indignation at the cowardice of such proceedings, said nothing further on the subject. A few moments later he was helping me with my wrap, which he put on upsidedown, making amusing remarks about ladies' cloaks in general and mine in particular.

CHAPTER XIII


THE BOLTONS, where we next lived, is, to me, one of the prettiest parts of London. There is a peace about the square, with its little church, around which the houses circle, that makes the town seem very far away, and enables one to play at being in the country. Jenny Lind (Madame Goldschmidt) lived a few doors from us, and that charming woman and artist, Madame Albani, across the square. However, "make believe" as one would, The Boltons was not quite the country, and in our first spare weeks we hurried away to Windermere's beautiful hills and glades. From our little cottage in the Kirkstone Pass we frequently walked to Ambleside and Rydall; stopping at Grasmere, lingering in its church-yard to read some favorite poem by Wordsworth while sitting at his grave; rowing on the lake where memories of poor Shelley crowded upon us; then on again to Ravenscrag, halting for a moment at the Kes-

wick* parish church to pay a passing tribute to Southey's tomb, arriving at Derwentwater whole-somely tired after a long day's walk. On our first visit to this, the most beautiful of England's lakes, my brother and I found that, in our usual careless way, we had arrived with insufficient means to pay our hotel expenses. The necessary articles for our night's stay we carried on our shoulders, and we had literally nothing else to offer. Our dilemma was serious. The next morning my brother began nervously to explain our difficulty to the landlord, when, to his intense relief, that personage remarked, "Too happy, sir, to have Miss Anderson here; you can pay whenever you like." My profession has helped me out of many emergencies of this kind, for I have never been known to have the necessary penny about me. John T. Raymond used to say that a well-known actor has always a strong hold upon those who have seen him upon the stage, which "gets him

* The old sexton there was so pleased with our interest in the poet and the place that he became communicative. His father, he said, had lived in Southey's house as a domestic, and as a lad he himself had seen Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey all sitting together in that same church. Coleridge was the one he liked best. "He always had a smile even for the likes of me. Wordsworth, he was preachy."



in ahead of most individuals." He enjoyed telling how he was once at the end of a long line of Senators waiting, like himself, to get at the desk of a certain Washington hotel to engage their rooms. One of the clerks who had seen him as Colonel Sellers winked, quietly beckoned, and at once led him to one of the best apartments in the house, while the weighty makers of the law had patiently to await their respective turns. The actor has undoubtedly the advantage over most people, for those who have laughed and cried with him feel a certain intimacy, though they may not know him personally. John McCullough told me he had frequently been accosted in public places with "How are you, John? Come and have a drink," from persons he had never seen before, who, when he informed them in dignified tones that he knew them not, readily answered, "Ah! but I know *you!* I saw you play *Virginius* last night; so do come along and have a drink." This feeling of friendliness on the part of strangers is often complimentary and convenient, but more frequently it is embarrassing and annoying. I have had people bolt into my private sitting or dining room on the pretext of wishing to buy tickets for the theatre, or my photograph. I remember two well-dressed women, to



all appearances ladies, boldly entering the room while I was at breakfast, seating themselves, and calmly requesting me to continue my meal. Their sole excuse for their cool invasion and rude questions was that they had seen me as Galatea the night before, and wished to know how I looked off the stage. One night my maid had to return unexpectedly from the theatre for something she had left at the hotel. She found my room filled with young ladies, who, having bribed the chambermaid to open the door with her key, were rummaging about among my effects. Their embarrassment on being discovered was, I think, a sufficient punishment for their idle curiosity. Indeed, the number of such impertinences that well-known actors are subjected to is beyond credence.

During one of our visits to Stratford Mr. Flower took me over the Memorial Theatre, and requested that I should act there. I liked the idea, resolved to do so, and soon began to study the part of Rosalind for the purpose. To make one's self acquainted with a character, the chief difficulty lies, not in memorizing the lines, but in determining by the closest study how different characters act in situations common to all. Rosalind may be madly in love with Orlando, yet she can jest, be



merry, and have a mock marriage; while the gentle Imogen under the same conditions would droop and fade away. Desdemona may be separated from her love, yet she does not fret nor mourn at his absence. Absence to Juliet is death.* Queen Constance goes mad, raves, and tears her hair at the loss of her son. Hermione, on hearing of the death of Mamillius, swoons like one dead, revives, and after living for sixteen years away from those she loves best, suddenly comes back into their midst without any outward sign of great emotion. These are all noble women, to whom their love is their life; and yet how differently each expresses what she feels! Fortunately, Shakespeare gives a key-note to the nature of most of his characters. For instance, Hermione, when accused by her husband, bears herself with quiet dignity, though wounded irreparably in her deepest affection.

* How clearly Juliet shows this in the following lines! (Act iii. scene ii.):

“Tybalt is dead and Romeo—banished;
That—banished, that one word—banished,
Hath slain ten thousand Tybalts.

* * * *

Romeo is banished—to speak that word
Is father, mother, Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet,
All slain, all dead.”

"Good my lords,"

she says (turning to the nobles for justification),

"I am not prone to weeping, as our sex
Commonly are; the want of which vain dew,
Perchance, shall dry your pities; but I have
That honorable grief lodged here which burns
Worse than tears drown."

Again, under the brutal treatment of the king,
she says:


"I must be patient till the heavens look
With an aspect more favorable."

This speech shows Hermione to be a woman of great self-control and dignity, even in the most terrible situation conceivable, and was my clew to her character. Such a creature would be incapable of unbridled excitement or violently expressed emotion even under the greatest pressure. Many, I believe, did not sympathize with my outward calmness in the accusation scene; but I resolved not to give up my conception of the master's text for any stage effect. The common belief that Juliet is merely a sentimental love-lorn maiden seems to me fallacious. From the moment she loves Romeo, Juliet becomes, in my humble opinion, a woman capable of heroic action

in all that concerns her love. The essence of her nature comes out so strongly in the following lines that I modelled her character upon them. She is already married to Romeo, and her union with Paris has been arranged by her parents to take place on the morrow. In despair she goes to her friend Friar Laurence for counsel. "If," she says,

"in thy wisdom thou canst give no help,
Do thou but call my resolution wise,
And with this knife I'll help it presently.
God joined my heart with Romeo's, thou our hands;
And ere this hand, by thee to Romeo sealed,
Shall be the label to another deed,
Or my true heart with treacherous revolt
Turn to another, this shall slay them both:
Therefore out of thy long-experienced time
Give me some present counsel; or, behold,
'Twixt my extremes and me this bloody knife
Shall play the umpire."

Of course some natures are inconsistent, and must be dealt with accordingly. The development of these various types, with their natural personality, mannerisms, etc., is a most engrossing study. How would such a man or woman weep under given circumstances? Would he or she weep at all? And so in joy as well as sorrow, under the influence of every emotion, they have their individual way of doing everything. The



art is to make the character harmonious from beginning to end; and the greatest actor is he who loses his own personality in that of his *rôle*.

I played Rosalind for the first time in the Memorial Theatre at Stratford-on-Avon for the benefit of that building. Through Mr. Flower's kindness the whole atmosphere on that occasion was thoroughly Shakespearian. The stage was decorated with blossoms from Shakespeare's garden; the flowers used by Rosalind and Celia, as well as the turnip gnawed by Audrey, had been plucked near Anne Hathaway's cottage; the deer carried across the stage in the hunting chorus had been shot in Charlcot Park for the occasion—so I was told—by one of the Lucys.

While dressing I heard a splash of oars, and saw groups of the audience arriving in boats. The shining Avon under my window, the fields and waving willows beyond, and the picturesque church near by, are all a part of that first performance. Rosalind's glee and sparkle, her wholesomeness and good-nature, with just a touch of tender sadness here and there, appealed to me so strongly that for a time I wished to act nothing else. I give Mr. William Winter's account of



the reception of the play at Shakespeare's birth-place.*

" . . . When, therefore, it was made known that Miss Anderson would enact *Rosalind* for the first time in her life, and at Stratford-on-Avon, for the benefit of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, it was natural that a wave of excitement, to which even mighty London gave an impetus, should soon surge around this usually peaceful haven of Shakespearian pilgrimage. Such a wave I found here; and until to-day—when all is over and the actors are gone, and the representatives of the London press have returned to the capital, and the crowd has dispersed—Stratford has not seemed in the least like itself. Now it is once more as silent as a cloister and as slumberous as the bower of the *Sleeping Beauty* in the wood. But from this time it will possess a new charm for the American pilgrim—being associated henceforth with the presence of the authentic queen of the American stage.


"The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre will hold nearly seven hundred persons. Its reserved portion contains four hundred and eighty seats. All of these were sold within an hour and a half

* "The Stage Life of Mary Anderson," by William Winter.



of the opening of the box-office on August 25th. Miss Anderson came down on the 27th with her company, and rested at the Red Horse, and thus she was enabled to devote two evenings precedent to the performance to a dress rehearsal of the comedy. Many social attentions were offered to her. Under the escort of the Mayor of Stratford she visited Clopton House—a picturesque and famous old place, the former residence of Sir Hugh Clopton, who was a Lord Mayor of London in 1492, reign of Henry VII., and who built the great bridge that still spans the Avon on the Oxford high-road. She was seen also at the Shakespeare birthplace in Henley Street, where the Misses Chataway welcomed her as an old friend. But for the most part she remained in seclusion, awaiting what was felt to be a serious professional ordeal. All about the town, meanwhile, her professional associates dispersed themselves, to view the relics of the great poet and to ‘fleet the time merrily, as they did in the golden age.’ Stratford can seldom have been as gay as it was during these two or three days; never surely was it gayer. From London came down a large deputation of journalists. The trains brought many an eager throng from the

teeming hotels of sprightly Leamington. One party of twenty-five Americans came in from the sylvan hamlet of Broadway. Visitors to Trinity Church found that flowers had been scattered upon the gravestone of Shakespeare and upon the slabs that cover the dust of his wife and daughter. When the day of the performance came a bright sun and a soft breeze made the old town brilliant and balmy, and but for the falling leaves and the bare aspect of field and meadow there was no hint that summer had passed. A more distinguished or a more judicious audience than was assembled in the Memorial Theatre could not be wished, and has not often been seen. Mr. Forbes Robertson, an intellectual and graceful actor, thoughtful in spirit and polished in method, began the performance, coming on as Orlando. No performer other than Miss Anderson, however, could expect to attract especial notice on this night. It was for her that the audience reserved its enthusiasm, and this, when at length she appeared as Rosalind, burst forth in vociferous plaudits and cheers, so that it was long before the familiar voice, so copious, resonant, and tender, rolled out its music upon the eager throng and her action could proceed.




Before the night ended she was continually cheered with a warmth of enthusiasm unusual in this country."

An amusing coincidence occurred at Leeds, where we proceeded after leaving Stratford. A few weeks before, at the house of Mr. William Black, the autograph hunter was being discussed and roundly abused, for all present were public persons. The best story on the subject was told by Mr. Black of a certain friend of his who, as a youth, made a practice of seeking the signatures of distinguished persons. Again and again he requested Carlyle, Beaconsfield, and other eminent men for their autographs, but in vain. Finally he hit upon a stratagem worthy of Machiavelli. He wrote to each of the most obdurate of the great ones that he had a fine yacht which he wished to name after him. By return post he had affirmative autographic answers from them all, the Chelsea sage going so far as to wish "that the *Thomas Carlyle* might sail ever under blue skies and on smooth waters." While in Leeds we were driving one day with Sir W. R. Again the subject of autographs came up. I related the story, and was surprised that Sir W. did not seem amused. When I had finished he

simply said, "Perhaps it's you who will be astonished when I tell you that I was the boy who lied so successfully." And I had been handling autograph hunters unmercifully to this archfiend among them! Though understanding the desire to possess characteristic letters from favorite and illustrious persons, I cannot comprehend the prevalent wish for a mere signature. Usually the autograph seeker sends with his request a stamped and addressed envelope. This is the least troublesome attack. When, however, they invade one's peace with handsomely bound books filled with prominent names, stating the value of the same, and requesting poetic quotations and an immediate return of the volumes by registered post, their bombardment assumes a more serious aspect. I have been so unfortunate as to have several such books lying on my table at a time, their addresses lost, and in despair of ever getting them back to their respective owners. A great poet once told me that he always refused to write his name, and felt no compunction in applying the stamps sent him to charitable purposes.


At Birmingham I had the privilege of meeting Cardinal Newman. His noble head, as seen in

his various portraits, led one to suppose His Eminence a man of large build. I was surprised to find him very small and fragile. No picture of him gives the spiritual beauty of his face. His thick hair was so white that it looked as if some snowy powder had been thrown over it. His eyes were light in color, small and full of expression. When he smiled they had the youthful look of a boy of ten. His manner was pleasant, though not so winning or courtly as that of Cardinal Manning, who might have been a prince in the most brilliant of courts. Cardinal Newman had more of the reserve of the student about him. During our first interview he startled me by saying, "So you go as far as a young lady can go—as far West, I mean," he explained in answer to my look of surprise. "I believe you were born in California." The youthful twinkle in his eyes was so irresistible that I laughed heartily. I can still see his slight, almost shrivelled figure, clad in a black-and-red cassock, and the beautiful head and snowy hair with the scarlet skull-cap. There was such a marked character about him that even a passing glance in a crowd would have stamped his personality upon one's memory. The kindness of his heart, as well as his forgetfulness of the




flight of time in his life of thought, are well illustrated by the following anecdote told me by Miss B. Her father had come over to the Church with Dr. Newman. A strong friendship existed between them. One of Miss B.'s sisters married and had a child. In his visits to the family Cardinal Newman never forgot to bring the little one a plaything of some kind. The mother, with her child, was called away to India to join her husband, who was stationed there. Many years passed. She died, and her daughter, then a young lady of sixteen, came back to England to stop with her aunt, Miss B. The latter had informed the cardinal of the girl's return; and when he next came to town they were astonished and touched to see him arrive with his pockets, as of old, filled with toys. He had forgotten the lapse of years, and only remembered with beautiful fidelity the old custom.

The number of plays submitted to artists is incredible. Generally they are absolutely unsuited to the person who is requested to read, and, if possible, produce them. Among the very few good ones I have received was one written for me by Mrs. Craik (Miss Mulock). The period she chose was that of the Diocletian persecutions,



and her heroine was a young girl who suffers martyrdom rather than give up her faith. The subject and its treatment were alike charmingly poetical. The arena scene at the end unfortunately made it impracticable for stage purposes. I regretted this deeply for many reasons. I had always felt a great admiration and gratitude to Miss Mulock since my early youth, when her "John Halifax, Gentleman," had shown me a new and serious side of life, which visibly affected my growing character. The loftiness of her nature and aims was as clearly shown in her countenance as in her writing. To me her face and its expression were beautiful. Her complexion was clear and unfurrowed, her eyes large and blue, and her hair silvery and abundant. Over her head, in lieu of the conventional and ugly white cap, she wore a piece of rich old lace, which fell gracefully about her neck and shoulders. Her tall figure was striking in its simple bodice and ample skirt of black silk or velvet. Madame Antoinette Sterling, whose fine, organ-like voice has given so much pleasure to all classes, had introduced me to this rare woman when first I went to London, and together we visited her in her Kentish home. It was in the spring, and in



her invitation she promised us "a time with the primroses and nightingales." And, indeed, the woods looked as though they were carpeted with delicate yellow velvet, so thick were these most lovely wild flowers, while the air was alive with the song of the nightingale. We did not meet frequently, but always greeted each other as friends. She used to say that our work had made us such. Her sudden death was a shock and grief to all who had come into her gentle presence. She had been to the theatre but a week or two before she died, and the last thing she ever wrote for publication was her article on the play she then saw—our production of "The Winter's Tale" in London.

After a very successful fortnight in Edinburgh and Glasgow we ended our tour at Dublin. Among my pleasant souvenirs of that visit is the courtesy shown us by the Prince and Princess Edward Saxe-Weimar. The public was kinder than ever. After dragging our carriage through the streets, some thousands of warm-hearted Irishmen assembled under my window and sang "Come back to Erin, mavourneen, mavourneen." After the song they remained in front of the hotel until I appeared upon the balcony and

waved them a last farewell, amid cries of "Don't stay long!" "Come back soon!" The next morning we sailed from Queenstown to see home again after an absence of two years.



CHAPTER XIV

MANY actors, after the first glamour of the stage life has worn away, grow utterly weary of the incessant turmoil of the theatre. They may love the drama, yet consistently dislike the practice of dramatic art; for to be continually *en evidence* is a severe ordeal.

During my first year before the public I remember Junius Brutus Booth saying to me, "So you still like to fret and strut upon the boards? Wait till the novelty wears off! I would rather plough all day than act half the night."

This seemed so extraordinary to me then that I repeated what he had said to his eminent brother Edwin. He laughingly replied, "Quite right, too; Junius would have ploughed better than he ever acted." Yet Edwin Booth himself, in the midst of his extraordinary successes, often spoke of his own longing for retirement and his dislike for public life. The following letter mentions the subject:

" ' BOOTHDEN,' NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND,

" *October 2, 1884.*

" MY DEAR MISS ANDERSON,— . . . As for that beautiful boy* I am ashamed to remember how I have ignored him. I hope his dear parents and sweet sister will forgive an old foggy's laziness and lapses of memory. He shall hear from me one of these days, when he is old enough to know me. I am sure you need no words to assure you of my sincere gratification at your success. The continued good reports of you give Edwina and myself great pleasure. I have received many calls from Germany, but do not think of crossing the sea again — not professionally, at all events. Though not weary of my profession, I am heartily tired of public life, which was always distasteful to me; and as I grow in years I shrink more and more from the glare and excitement of the life.

" Give my kindest regards to your parents, and believe me,

" Sincerely your friend and well-wisher,

" EDWIN BOOTH."

Fanny Kemble's dislike for the stage is as well


* Referring to a promised present to his namesake, my small step-brother.



known as Macready's. Jenny Lind quitted it in the height of her success. "Once before the foot-lights, always before the foot-lights," does not, as is supposed, hold good in all cases. Lady Martin (Helen Faucit) told me that while acting with Macready her three nights a week so wearied her physically and mentally that at the end of the acting season the very beauties of nature, of which she was so passionately fond, had lost their charm for her, so deadened with overwork had become even her powers of appreciation. A performance every night and twice on Saturdays and holidays makes the actor's life a kind of slavery. I own that Washington's Birthday only meant to me an extra afternoon's work; and, try as I would, I could not, even in my most patriotic moments, arouse the proper enthusiasm for the saviour of my country on that day, though in my youth I had yearly waved American flags, and suffered burned fingers cheerfully in his honor. Thanksgiving Day was greeted with *un*thankfulness for the same reason. I recall Salvini holding forth earnestly against such overwork. "Why will you American and English artists allow yourselves to travel under managers who demand seven, sometimes eight, performances weekly of you?" he

asked me. "I cannot believe that an artist would risk losing his voice and health, while continually doing injustice to his *rôles*, for mere money reasons. How many good voices can you count among your English-speaking artists? Most of them are anything but melodious. My wonder is they have any voices at all with such constant work. If I play two nights consecutively my voice becomes husky, and I lose a certain control over it." I agreed with him entirely, but assured him that, harmful as the system might be, there seemed no possibility of changing it, as managers, for financial reasons, refused to allow their artists to act only three nights weekly. "Where there is a will there is a way," he answered. "Were all the attractions to band together and refuse to act, as I do, more than three times a week, they would have the impresarios in their power." Poor Chizzola, his friend and manager, who was standing by, smiled sadly at this, no doubt lamenting his managerial losses on the other three nights.

The French, recognizing Winklemann's principle that repose should underlie all true artistic attainment, arrange in their leading theatres that the artists shall have several nights weekly for rest, study, or recreation. I believe that to this



they owe much of the excellence that makes them so pre-eminent in the art of acting. Add to this the advantage of a systematic, early training, and the recognition of the theatre by the state, both of which are largely ignored in our English-speaking countries, and the difference between French art and ours is not to be wondered at.


We arrived at New York on a dark, rainy morning, disappointed at not seeing our friends, who, weary with awaiting the delayed arrival of the *Gallia*, had given us up for another day. Our hotel windows faced the cathedral. It was at the time of the lying in state of the lamented Cardinal McCloskey. There was something very dismal in the melancholy procession of umbrellas (from above one could not see their owners) which filed in and out of the church from morning until night.

"As You Like It" was the first play we produced in New York. It was not a complete success. This was a keen disappointment. The company, many of whom had acted with me since my first appearance in England, condoled with me on the coldness of the audience, contrasting its frigidity with the warmth of those abroad. This, coming from strangers, though well meant, was, in its truth, humiliating. Not that I minded failure, for

an occasional lack of success is rousing and helpful. But the coldness of my reception on returning home was very saddening.

"Pygmalion and Galatea," "Comedy and Tragedy," "The Lady of Lyons," and "Romeo and Juliet" followed. The last was a brilliant success; but the failure of the first part of the season and the death of my old and valued friend, John McCullough, cast a gloom over the entire New York engagement. We next visited Boston, where, as usual, from the beginning we had a right royal welcome. Edwin Booth and Salvini were acting together there at the time. I never saw the combination, and cannot imagine it as effective. An English Hamlet and an Italian Ghost must have been far from convincing in their relationship of father and son. Though neither Booth nor Salvini spoke much of their association, I surmised that, in spite of their appreciation of each other's work, their artistic feelings were sorely tried, not only by the medley of languages, but by the incongruity of the two different schools of acting.

During our stay in Boston that delightful poet and man, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, gave a reception to Booth, Salvini, and myself. As my play



that night was a short one, I arrived before either of the great tragedians. Booth, fresh from his performance of Hamlet, entered soon after. Society, he had confessed to me years before, was a torture to him. In a crowd, he said, he felt conscious of wearing a gloomy scowl, which, being forced into a smile, changed to what he knew to be a fixed grin. He admitted that among many people he could never listen to the person with whom he was talking, but was always attracted by the remarks of some one standing near by, which left him in blank and hopeless ignorance of his companion's conversation (a predicament that no doubt most of us have experienced). Salvini, who was greatly excited at having lost his way, came in very late. He joined us at once. Sitting between the two artists, I was enabled to observe the great difference between them: Booth, small, lithe of figure, his dark, lustrous eyes flashing with nervous vitality and intellect, his pale face calm and supremely melancholy in expression, was (though neither fat nor scant of breath), even in his modern evening dress, an ideal Hamlet. Salvini was massive, almost corpulent, with a lion-like head, a personality full of power, enthusiasm, and capable of the greatest passion, but en-

tirely void of that rapier-like keenness of intellect that was the very essence of Booth's individuality. I had known both men for years, and had often conversed with them separately. Seeing them together for the first time gave me an entirely new impression of both.

Addison, I think, says that conversation is possible only between two persons. This applied to Edwin Booth more than to most people. In the presence of a congenial companion his nature seemed to expand, whereas with the many, no matter how sympathetic, he would invariably become silent and reserved. Seeing him with his aged mother (who had given him his glorious eyes) or with any member of his family, one could not doubt the deep note of tenderness in his nature. His loyalty to his friends and his generosity to the poor were proverbial.

Joseph Jefferson, who was acting in the vicinity of Boston during our engagement, came occasionally to the "Hub," and once again I delighted in his conversation. The wise and witty things fell from his lips like the rubies and diamonds from the mouth of the good little girl in the fairy tale. Jefferson is not only a great actor—in my opinion the greatest living comedian—but a charming

writer as well. I know little of his painting, but from the engravings and etchings I have seen of his pictures I should say he was a very interesting artist also. The arts are, after all, "fingers on one hand;" and a genius for one often means a facility for some of the others, and generally a love for them all.

Two weeks of one-night towns followed our Boston engagement. Such constant change makes one lose track of time as well as place. As an illustration of this, I may mention that years before, during a month of such travel, a friend and I purchased some flowers with which to decorate Our Lady's altar in the church of a country town where we had just arrived, and where we were to act that night. While engaged at our work a priest entered from the sacristy and stood watching its progress. I had warned my friend beforehand not to mention my name, fearing that a possible prejudice against the stage might cause a refusal of my flowers. The good father expressed himself greatly pleased with our decorations.

"Have you been long in our town?" he questioned.

"We arrived only this morning," I answered.

"Where have you come from, if I may ask?"

A blank seized my mind. Having visited a new city every day for four weeks, I could not think from what town we had just come, and foolishly answered, "I—I don't know." His reverence looked surprised; and wishing, no doubt, to relieve my embarrassment, asked if we were to remain long in ———. On being told that we were leaving that night, he naturally inquired where we were going. In my confusion I again foolishly answered, "I—I do not know." He looked at me with much wonder, and, with a distant "Good-morning," went back into the sacristy. My friend there was interrogated in the same way, and answered much as I had done. The astonished father then left hurriedly, thinking, no doubt, that his church was in the possession of two escaped lunatics.

After visiting all of the important Eastern and many of the Southern cities, we toured through the West. At Salt Lake City we found our old friend, General McC——, who, during our stay, took us about in an army ambulance drawn by six mules. I had had many such drives in earlier years, but they were particularly enjoyable after a period of ultra-civilization in London. Like Hans Christian Andersen's Little Claus, one felt like

shouting out, "Whoa! look at my six horses!" (mules in this case), as, whipped up by the blue-coated, brass-buttoned soldier, they flew through the broad streets. We played "Pygmalion and Galatea" there. The house was largely composed of groups of women with one unfortunate husband sitting in their midst. One of the stage boxes was quite filled with women, while in the foreground sat the newest wife, with the husband of them all close beside her, the old ones literally obliged to take back seats. The play was received with enthusiasm until Galatea's lines to Pygmalion, "Then I will be thy wife," to which he answers, "That may not be; I have a wife. The gods allow but *one*;" when I grew cold, awaiting the effect of a doctrine so opposed to Mormon practice. But, fortunately, their only sign of disapproval was a rigid silence from that moment to the end of the performance. Their resentment was so deep that Gilbert's most amusing lines, which were always received with roars of laughter, failed to elicit even a smile.

Salt Lake City, lying in a grove of fruit trees, with wide streets, through which clear mountain streams flow, is, I think, one of the most beautiful cities in America. There is an excellent view of

it from Fort Douglas, from which one can see the Rocky Mountains, peaked with snow, and the lake shining like a huge sapphire in the distance. There is a bloom of freshness and a freedom in the life out there—a stamp of strong individuality on both people and place, upon which “form” and conventionality have not yet breathed. General Eli Murray, whom I had known since childhood, was then governor of the territory, and winning golden opinions for the admirable manner in which he filled his office, while slowly accomplishing the uprooting of polygamy in Utah. On seeing the large graveyard set apart for Brigham Young, his numerous wives, seventy or eighty children, and their prospective descendants, the evil and the governor’s task seemed alike interminable.

The journey from Salt Lake City to Sacramento is one of the most interesting imaginable, on account of the diversity of its scenery. I must confess to a feeling of pride and satisfaction on seeing my birthplace. There is something almost tropical about the luxuriance of its palms, roses, and magnolias; and the Spanish character and picturesqueness of some of its buildings lend to it a glamour of Old World romance.

A public reception enabled me to see all the in-

habitants of that dear little town. Everybody, from the governor down, came to join in the touchingly warm welcome to their townswoman—"Sacramento's Daughter," as they were pleased to call me. Some very poor people came by the dais for a handshake, among them several barefooted children. Pioneers, "forty-niners," representatives from all the different classes in the city were present, and made a very interesting and characteristic crowd. I shall never forget the heartiness of that reception, or the feeling almost of kinship I had for every one who, like myself, had been born in that beautiful valley.

I naturally expected another ovation that night at the theatre; but on coming down from Galatea's pedestal I also descended from my great expectations. The house was hardly half full, and I do not remember a hand of applause during the entire performance. I learned that the local press declared "that most of Sacramento's amateurs could have played Galatea with far more effect." I acted there only one night; and though my townspeople did not care for the artist, the woman will never forget the heartiness of their welcome to her.

At San Francisco, where we next appeared, crowded houses and praise on all sides greeted

us. This was also a surprise. I could not believe it to be the same place where, years before, as a very young and struggling girl, I had lost money nightly for that kindest of friends, John McCullough, and where I had shed so many tears of disappointment at receiving only discouragement from press and fellow-actors.


San Francisco has the advantage of being near the ocean—a blessing to its poorer inhabitants and an absolute respite to a band of weary players, who are more than thankful to have the must and dust of the theatre blown off by a fresh salt breeze. Having lived for nearly sixteen years in Kentucky, it was not until I had gone upon the stage and was acting in Charleston, South Carolina, that I first saw the sea. It was in a brilliant mood that day, and the flashing and dancing of its purple, green, and blue waves left me almost breathless at the sight of so much splendor. I loved it at once, and later, on making Long Branch our summer home, it was my habit to pass hours daily watching the ocean under the spell of all the different lights of early morning, noon, and night.

During the San Francisco engagement how refreshing it was, after a weary night at the theatre, to watch from the “beach when the morning was

shining" the wonders of the sea and sky! One almost envied the great lumbering seals as they tumbled about in the water. How remarkably like a crowd of men and women at a fashionable tea-party they were, on the huge rock that bears their name, and is generally covered with them. They seemed to shake hands with each other, and wander about its smooth surface until they found a congenial seal, by whose side they contentedly rested; each favorite holding its little court, and all of them chattering together in a way strongly resembling the human race at a social function.

Before leaving Frisco we visited the Chinese theatre, which is built far underground. In what we know as the green-room we found many Chinamen crowded together: some lying on shelves still drunk with opium, some cooking, others eating, the actors painting their faces and putting on their wigs, the whole atmosphere stifling with the odor of opium smoke and frying food. I was introduced to the great attraction of the Chinese stage, a favorite impersonator of women, who had been paid an immense sum by his countrymen in San Francisco to leave China, where he was so greatly admired that he had to leave surreptitiously. It was impossible, on seeing him in a woman's

dress, with his delicate features and shining black wig, to believe him to be a man. He handled his fan with enough grace to excite the envy of a Spanish señorita. He spoke to me as to a fellow-artist; and was exceedingly courteous and kind. When he bade me adieu, his hand felt like a bundle of finger-nails. We witnessed the play from the stage (they have no wings or curtain), in full sight of the audience. We saw but little of it, though we remained a long time, for the Chinese often take a year to act a single play. But we had the good-fortune to see several of the artists come from behind a door at the back of the stage, go through a scene in which one of them was killed, and the corpse, after lying rigid for a moment, spring up suddenly, bow, smile, and make his exit through the same door, all to the melancholy scraping of a one-stringed instrument and the dismal howl of a human voice. From where we stood we had an opportunity of observing how the rows of Chinese faces in the audience resembled a huge collection of old ivory curios. Though we were accompanied by several officers of the law, the sight of those uncanny people, so far from the free air and our own kind, was anything but reassuring.



We terminated our season in Chicago, Boston, and New York. Though it had been the most successful one I had known in America, I felt, when it ended, a greater desire than ever to leave the stage and to begin a life of freedom and peace far away from its publicity and drudgery.

CHAPTER XV

FANNY KEMBLE, in her delightful "Recollections of a Girlhood," says, in speaking of her aunt, the famous Mrs. Siddons: "The last years of her life made a profound impression upon me. Her apparent deafness and indifference to everything I attributed less to her advanced age and impaired powers than to what I supposed to be the withering and dying influence of the over-stimulating atmosphere of emotion, excitement, and admiration in which she had passed her life."

Certainly one of the evils attending the abnormal rush of the theatre is, to the young, a restlessness accompanied by vague longings which, as soon as satisfied, give way to new dissatisfaction; and, to the old, that pathetic listlessness described so well by Fanny Kemble, who, having spent her life in a theatrical family of great fame, realized its full meaning.

There is a belief among certain classes that the stage and immorality are synonymous. This is

so palpably blind prejudice that it needs no refutation. My observation has taught me that the greatest dangers of the theatre are a strong tendency to vanity, a certain carelessness about the great realities of life (which are principally noticed and used for gaining dramatic effects), and the feverish lack of repose that made the old age of Mrs. Siddons so pitiable. It is not good for an instrument to be strung too high; and it seems to me that the actor (an instrument of many strings) is constantly tuned up to concert pitch.

During my last years before the public I felt and dreaded the undermining effects of such restlessness, and, after the season in America, I resolved to take a full year's repose. To do this, offers from Spain, Germany, France, and Australia were refused. We went to a quiet part of Paris for the winter, taking an apartment near the Bois. But, instead of using my time for recreation, I devoted it to the study of French, music, and to general reading. As I had almost entirely educated myself, I wished to profit by such an opportunity for further improvement.

Our days always began with mass at Notre Dame des Victoires. What a lesson of beautiful and enduring faith that church teaches! One

In Albanian Costume. From Photograph, 1888.

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cannot look at the hundreds of *ex-votos* lining its every nook and corner without being touched and edified by the great number of believers in the actual daily help from the Divine Source.

That saintly and admirable woman, Mrs. Augustus Craven (*née* De la Ferronnays), the authoress of "Recit d'une Sœur," was then living in her quiet little home overlooking the picturesque garden of the Sacré Cœur. Her friend and mine, the charming Lady Herbert of Lea, took me to see her there. What a pretty, gay little creature she was! One could never think of her as old; for even in her life of seclusion and active spirituality her sympathy with all the realities of life, her animated interest in all the great events of the outside world, and her familiarity with the latest creations in literature and art, were full of the eagerness of youth. The excellence of her English made it almost impossible for one to think of her as a Frenchwoman. Her conversation was varied. She spoke as well on the drama of all countries as upon the deepest religious questions. She knew her Shakespeare thoroughly. "Romeo and Juliet" seemed to have a particular charm for her. The simplicity, humility, good-humor, and a nameless distinction about her,



born of her spirituality, made one feel greatly privileged in having spent an hour or two in her gentle presence. I wondered at the time what she would have been at her age had she fretted away her life upon the stage. I also saw Ristori again while in Paris. We had several engrossing talks about the plastic art, and took great pleasure in illustrating to each other the effects to be got out of classic draperies. To a Greek, her drapery was what a fan is to the woman of Spain: by swinging and changing its folds she was able almost to converse with it. The yards of beautiful soft stuff enveloping her form gave to her every movement a flowing grace, and added a breadth and importance to her presence. How often I have wished that the ancient Greek costume would again become and remain the fashion! Ristori had spent hours before many of the great statues, and seemed to have learned and loved the language of every line and fold.

Ruskin once said to me that he had never cared for plastic art; and was good enough to add that my *Galatea* had given him more of an appreciation for it than he had ever expected to have. I cannot understand the almost general lack of enthusiasm for the great statues. To me they

say as much as the rarest pictures, and are as eloquent as the music of Bach or Beethoven. I only refer to the greatest; for a study of the work of many modern sculptors leaves one as cold as the marble itself; and the morbid cult of some of them for what is hideous is not only irritating but painful. I remember a visit to the studio of one of the most prominent French sculptors in Paris. After seeing everything in both of the huge ateliers, Lord Lytton (who was of the party), a singularly able critic in all matters artistic, suggested a visit to the morgue as a means of driving from our minds the hideous creations we had seen. We gladly assented; and indeed the three or four figures we saw there were far more beautiful, with the calm majesty of death upon them, than any of the representations of life we had seen in the studio. My friends in Paris were wont to say that many of my leisure moments were spent either at the Comédie Française or at the Nouveau Cirque. I confess that the circus has always had a great hold upon my affections. To see such riders as Madame Dockrill and Robert Stickney was a genuine artistic pleasure. The grace, power, and daring they exhibited were nothing short of wonderful. Their

extraordinary physical control served me, while still very young, as a lesson of how the will, backed by perseverance, may accomplish almost anything.

During that winter in Paris I undertook the responsibility of engaging the Lyceum for the following year, intending then to make my first effort at managing a theatre. But I had no play to produce. Many sketches and plays had been written for me, among them a scenario by W. G. Wills on "The Young Cleopatra," showing the life of the Egyptian queen until her meeting with Marc Antony. Unfortunately this was not one of his happiest efforts. He also began a play from a plot furnished him by Mr. Wilson Barrett, the first acts of which were very good. The *dénouement*, however, being commonplace, this was likewise abandoned. Mr. W. S. Gilbert read me his play, "Brantingham Hall"; but, realizing that the chief character was not in my line, I declined it. In his usual amusing way the author asked me whether my reason for doing so was because I found anything gross in it; "for," said he, "I hear that you hate gross things so much that you can hardly be induced to take your share of the gross receipts."

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Herman Merrivale's "Charlotte Corday," Edgar Fawcett's "Major André," Bulwer Lytton's unpublished play of "Tarquin and Lucretia"—afterwards produced by Wilson Barrett—and many others, were for some reason found impracticable, and I was strongly tempted to produce a dramatization of Madame de Staël's "Corinne," by an American diplomat; but no doubt Shakespeare had made me over-critical, for I eventually gave that up also. In the midst of the dilemma, my old friend Thomas Hall suggested my undertaking Hermione and Perdita, in "The Winter's Tale." I decided to do so: and the feeling of comfort and joy at being again under the protecting wing of the great bard can well be imagined.

Years before, when in the same predicament, I sought advice on the subject from Boucicault and Joseph Jefferson. Their answer was, in substance, "Why worry about modern plays while you have Rosalind, Imogene, and Beatrice still before you?" "And," Jefferson laughingly added, "besides, Shakespeare will not, like the modern author, worry you at rehearsals, nor demand his percentage of the receipts."

CHAPTER XVI

I MET Lord Tennyson during my first year in London, but it was not until I knew him in his own home that I learned a little of the largeness and beauty of his nature. His shyness or reserve during early acquaintanceship he concealed by a decided brusqueness of manner which was misleading to those who never realized the privilege of becoming his friends. I first visited the Tennysons at Aldworth, their Surrey home. How full of poetry and romance were its great oriel windows and flowered terraces! How full of peace its surrounding heather-covered slopes, studded with golden gorse, and its splendid landscape silently stretching far into the purple distance! I shall never forget my first meeting with Lady Tennyson. She was resting on the couch upon which she has lain for so many years. The lovely saintliness of her face recalled Ary Scheffer's "St. Monica," and Père Grou's words that "the greatest trial of suffering is not in the suffering

itself, but in the revolt in us against it." Not a trace of rebellion against her long illness was visible in her patient, smiling countenance.

At dinner the bard spoke with much enthusiasm of Homer, and made many quotations from the Iliad in Greek to illustrate the grand rolling sound of that language, and how fitted it was for poetry. He was merciless on all who made a wrong use of words; and pulled me up severely for speaking of some trivial thing as "awfully nice." "What is to become of writers if people will insist upon misusing and vulgarizing words of distinctive meaning?" My confusion at his just reproof was fortunately short-lived, for to my delight another guest, speaking soon after of something "awfully jolly," was scathed and withered on the spot. I was much surprised to learn from Lord Tennyson that he had heard Owen Meredith's "Lucille" was more popular in America than any single poem of either Longfellow, Matthew Arnold, or himself. When I mentioned this afterwards to the late Lord Lytton, he was not as pleased as I had expected. It was before the copyright law, and he informed me that he had never received the slightest remuneration for the enormous sale of his poems in our country.

In subsequent visits to the laureate's homes at Hazlemere and the Isle of Wight I had the happiness of joining him in the two hours' walk which, rain or shine, he took daily. His tender interest in every "bud and flower and leaf" was charming. How many pretty legends he had about each! The cliffs, the sky, the sea, and shrubs, the very lumps of chalk underfoot—he had a word for them all. The things he read in Nature's book were full of the same kind of poetry as his own; and the "sunbeams of his cheerful spirit" flood all my memories of those delightful walks. Though nearer eighty than seventy, his step was so rapid, he moved so briskly, that it was with difficulty I kept up with him. The last twenty minutes of the two hours generally ended in a kind of trot. Weather never interrupted his exercise. He scorned an umbrella. With his long dark mantle and thick boots, he defied all storms. When his large-brimmed hat became heavy with water, he would stop and give it a great shake, saying: "How much better this is than to be huddled over the fire for fear of a little weather!" His great strength and general health were due, no doubt, to the time he spent so regularly in the open air. Another example of the wonderful

effects of systematic exercise is Madame Schumann, whose mind is as fresh as her complexion, and whose energy and vitality, for one of her years, are truly wonderful. I was delighted to hear Tennyson praise the works of my great favorite, Kit Marlowe. He believed that Shakespeare had him to thank for some of his inspiration. We spoke of many poets living and long since dead, and of all he had something appreciative to say. His conversation was often interspersed with illustrative stories, many of them comic. The number he had of these was incredible. His friend James Russell Lowell, he said, had given him some good ones. Mr. Lowell prided himself on his quickness in seeing a point. "Nothing," he once remarked to me, "enrages me so much as to have some one tell me a good story and then explain it. It is an open insult to my intelligence." I have never met any one more perfect with whom to exchange anecdotes than Tennyson. At one time I made it a practice to put down and remember the many good ones I heard, for the selfish pleasure of repeating them to him. His broad sympathies made him understand one in all moods, and brought to light one's truest and best meaning. He was not a faddist in any sense of the word;

but saw the beauty of the field daisy as clearly as that of the rarest orchid.

During one of my visits Lord Tennyson gave me his charming pastoral, "Robin Hood." It had been written for Mr. Irving some time before, but had never been produced. The part of Maid Marian was altered and strengthened for me, and the title changed to "The Foresters." The bard's willingness to make necessary alterations for practical purposes was in strong contrast to the tenacity with which less eminent dramatists frequently cling to their every line. ✓

Before considering our scenery for "The Foresters" a visit was planned to the New Forest. Lord Tennyson, with his son and charming daughter-in-law, my mother, and I spent two days together under the "melancholy bows" of that beautiful wood. I had never seen the bard in gayer mood than during that long picnic. We lunched upon the ground, in the checkered shade, and walked and drove from morning till night through the great forest.

Passing some stray streamlet, it was delightful to see the aged poet play at ducks-and-drakes, and quote between whiles in his inimitable way:

"Flow on, cold rivulet, to the sea," etc., etc.


Two great trees we particularly admired. On returning home, photographs of them were sent us, with a line saying that thereafter the two trees would be known as the "Tennyson" and the "Mary Anderson."

We stopped at a small inn near by, where in the evening a grandson of Wordsworth came to pay his respects to the laureate, and to read to him an unpublished poem by his eminent grandfather. Not wishing to be known, we travelled *incognito*. Lord Tennyson passed as "Mr. Hood." It was "Mr. Hood" here and "Mr. Hood" there from us all, much to his amusement. Everything went well until the last morning, when the landlady asked, with a bob and a knowing look, if "his lordship would have any more toast?" We then realized how foolish we had been in imagining that Tennyson could have passed for any one but himself. He was a large, strongly-built man, with a lion-like head, splendidly poised on broad shoulders. His profile was particularly noble. His hands were large and shapely; his fingertips square. Any one understanding the subject would have called them honest, trust-inspiring hands, capable of doing good and great things.

When he read to us I generally sat near him

on a low seat, with his face between me and the candle that lighted his book, the rest of the room in darkness. The silhouette of his beautiful features is one of my most treasured mind-portraits.


Readers or reciters are, as a rule, wearisome. They look to the right when they speak the woman's part, to the left when the man speaks, or *vice versa*. There is often in their efforts an ostentatious attempt at acting; and when, as frequently happens, the right and left become confused, the listener is in a fog as to who is really speaking. The poet gave himself none of these manners. He simply sat in our midst, and told us his story of The Cup, Guinevere, Elaine, Maud, as the case might be. A rhythmic tolling of the death-bells and a cadence of martial music ran through his reading of the "Funeral Ode to Wellington," which made it most solemn and impressive. I have heard him read many of his shorter poems also, and have had more poetic pleasure in the darkened room, with only the swinging monotone of the poet's fine voice to break its stillness, than I have ever experienced in any theatre. He generally made interesting remarks between the pieces while quietly smoking his pipe. Though the tears often coursed down his cheeks in the



pathetic parts, I never saw him make a gesture while reading. It was as if through the medium of his sonorous voice his spirit poured forth through his words. He was not an elocutionist, and therein lay one of his great charms as a reader. I do not wish to depreciate the art of elocution, for, if thoroughly learned and then apparently forgotten, it may be of great value to the actor.

Artists are often complimented on their gestures and elocution. Is this not poor praise? Had we known Hamlet, and been spectators of his sad life, should we, at some show of grief or passion from him, have noticed his reading? Should we have remarked Juliet's gestures had we been beside her when she discovered Romeo dead? Rachel was pained when a great critic said to her, "I shall never forget your expression and gestures in the last act to-night." His attention having been drawn to the *means* she had employed, proved to her that she had not gained her *end*—viz., to make her auditors believe that they were in the actual presence of the character she was impersonating.

Lady Martin, though she told me that Macready's suggestions for general reading had been



invaluable to her, never gave the slightest hint of being an elocutionist. It was at her house that I first heard her. She read "The Lady of Lyons." It will be remembered that she was the original Pauline. Neither in costume nor looks did she in the least suggest Bulwer's heroine; yet she had not turned the second page before I felt myself in the presence of an ideal Pauline. I have seen the part played by many young and beautiful women, but Lady Martin, book in hand, spectacles on nose, seated by her tea-table, with no audience but Sir Theodore and myself, produced greater effects than any of the others with all their stage accessories. She had what Lord Tennyson possessed so largely—a power of saturating herself with the vital essence of what she read, and infusing it into her listeners.

Finding the Kensington district relaxing, we sought a home near the Heath at Hampstead. Although it is not a fashionable quarter, and is often identified with 'Arrys and 'Arriets, it is (except on bank holidays) a delightfully quiet place, and so bracing that I went through an entire season while living there without experiencing the slightest fatigue. Many artists of the brush and pen (they seem always to find the best

of everything) made their nests there — among them George du Maurier, Holliday, the late lamented John Pettie, and Edwin Long. One often met Du Maurier on the Heath, selecting bits of the landscape for his *Punch* illustrations. How charming the originals of these are few know. We once had his house for a month: the stairway was lined with the drawings for the *Punch* reproductions, and as a result my journeys up and down stairs took many a half-hour.


The Heath is reminiscent to me of many friends, prominent among them that rarest of minds, Aubrey de Vere, to whom I owe many happy walks over its bracken and heather. His love for everything beautiful in art and nature made his influence especially refining and his conversations as charming as his essays and poems. To hear him speak of his friends Sir Henry Taylor and Wordsworth gave one a new and even higher impression of both. Through him I became acquainted with Sir Henry Taylor's noble plays. I shall always be his debtor for the refreshing pleasure I had in reading "Philip van Arteveldt" and "The Sicilian Summer." We visited together the National Gallery several times. He liked to select some of our favorite pictures

and ask, "What does this figure say to you? What do you think the artist wished to show in this or that one?" Of the wonderful creations of Angelico, Perugino, Boticelli, Raphael, he had always something stimulating to say. He did not look at their work from the painter's point of view. The drawing, the way those mystic colors glorify the canvases, meant less to him than what the old masters said to the highest and best in his soul and mind. Aubrey de Vere's friends call him "The Orb," and are wont to say that his feet alone touch the earth, the rest of him being already in heaven. His loving loyalty to his friends is not the least beautiful trait in an exceptionally beautiful nature. Every year he comes from Ireland to visit the friends he loves best, nor does he forget those who are gone, nor fail to make a journey to the Lake district to pay a tribute of affection to the grave of his boyhood's friend, Wordsworth. Though old in years, the peace of his spiritual life has left his face unfurrowed. His color is fresh, red and white; his eyes young, clear, and blue; and his smile that of a child. All this youthfulness contrasts curiously with his gray hair and tall, thin, stooping body. One of his great charms to me is his carelessness of ex-

ternals. I remember driving with him through the Park during the season. I was in my smartest gown and bonnet. We were in a victoria. He held a Gamp-like umbrella, and opened it to keep the sunlight from his eyes. Years had turned its cotton blackness into a green-brown, and one of its ribs had fallen in from the decay of age; but he clung to it as he clings to his friends, whether in sickness or health, riches or poverty.

To enact both Hermione and Perdita was, I felt, a serious undertaking. I mentioned to Lord Tennyson my fear that doubling the parts would not be well received, especially by the critics. I remember so well his reply: "Thank God," he said, "the time is past for the *Quarterly* or the *Times* to make or mar a poem, play, or artist! Few original things are well received at first. People must grow accustomed to what is out of the common before adopting it. Your idea, if carried out as you feel it, will be well received generally—and before long." The bard's wisdom and decision, when asked for advice, were a great boon to his friends.

"The Winter's Tale" had never been a very successful play. Sarah Siddons acted the part of



Hermione, and we read that in the statue scene she was very beautiful, but that the earlier parts dragged. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean produced it with much magnificence and a fine cast; yet we never hear of its running for more than thirty nights. In studying the play, the reason of its non-success appeared to me to be the undue prominence given to several of the less important characters, and the comparatively short and interrupted appearance of the two heroines, which breaks the continued interest of the spectator. The first difficulty was to cut these secondary parts without marring the beauty or meaning of the text; and the next, to keep alive the sympathies of the audience with both Hermione and Perdita from beginning to end.

Without the assistance of books and suggestions given to me by William Black, Henry Irving, Lord Lytton, E. A. Abbey, and Thomas Hall I should never have dared to use the pruning-knife as freely as I did; and to them I owe hearty thanks for helping me over many rough places in this respect. As to keeping alive an unbroken interest in the mother and child (Hermione and Perdita) who are separated for the best part of two acts (sixteen years), I thought, after

careful consideration, that the best way was to follow the suggestion of Mr. Hall, and have the two parts played by the same person, my chief authority for doing so being the strong resemblance between Hermione and Perdita, remarked in the text:

“ . . . the majesty of the creature, in resemblance of the mother.”

And again, when Paulina reproves Leontes for looking at Perdita—

“ Sir, my liege,
Your eye hath too much youth in’t; not a month
’Fore your queen died she was more worth such
Gazes than what you look on now”—

he answers,

“ I thought of *her*
Even in these looks I made.”

To intrust Perdita to a person unlike the queen in looks, voice, or manner would, I thought, give the lie to the king’s words, lessen the interest in the last two acts, and, from an acting point of view, spoil the continuity of the play. Had doubling the parts necessitated cutting out the important speeches of either character, the idea would have been abandoned. But as only six of Perdita’s lines were sacrificed, I did not feel guilty of

any vandalism in doing so. We produced the play for the first time in Nottingham, to celebrate Shakespeare's birthday. It proved a great success, both with the people of that city and with the numerous Londoners who came especially to see it.

My surprise and disappointment may be imagined when, in the following September, it was not received with any marked enthusiasm on its first night in London. The cast was as follows :

Leontes	. (King of Sicilia)	. Mr. J. FORBES-ROBERTSON.
Mamillius	. (his son)	. Miss MABEL HOARE.
Camillo	} (four lords of Sicilia)	Mr. J. MACLEAN.
Antigonus		Mr. GEO. WARDE.
Cleomenes		Mr. ARTHUR LEWIS.
Dion		Mr. F. RAPHAEL.
A Councillor	. . . .	Mr. K. BLACK.
Court Officer	. . . .	Mr. H. PAGDEN.
Court Herald	. . . .	Mr. LENNOX.
Officer of Guard	. . . .	Mr. GALLIFORD.
A Jailer	. . . .	Mr. DAVIES.
Hermione	(queen to Leontes)	} Miss MARY ANDERSON.
Perdita	{ (daughter to Leontes and Hermione)	
Paulina	(wife to Antigonus)	Mrs. JOHN BILLINGTON.
Emilia	. (a lady)	Miss HELENA DACRE.
1st Lady	. (with song)	Miss DESMOND.
2d Lady	. . . .	Miss RUSSELL.
Polixenes	. (King of Bohemia)	Mr. F. H. MACKLIN.
Florizel	. (his son)	Mr. FULLER MELLISH.
Old Shepherd	{ (reputed father of Perdita)	} Mr. W. H. STEPHENS.

Clown	.	(his son)	.	Mr. G. ANDERSON.
Autolycus	.	(a rogue)	.	Mr. CHARLES COLLETTE.
Archidamus	(a lord of Bohemia)			Mr. GLEN WINN.
Mopsa	{	(shepherdesses)	{	Miss JEFFIE TILBURY.
Dorcas				Miss AYRTON.

I heard that many of the "first-nighters" voted it dull and heavy, and prophesied that it could not run for more than two weeks. My pet play looked very like a failure. But after that, "the actor's greatest judge"—the public—continued to fill the house nightly, and received it with increasing warmth. It kept the stage for a hundred and sixty-four nights; and had not my tenancy of the Lyceum then expired, it would probably have run on for another hundred. This was the only time in my experience that I acted the same play from the beginning to the end of a season.

In a letter about old times, that brilliant painter and incomparable friend and host, Alma-Tadema, mentions my farewell to the London stage. I cannot do better than let his graphic words describe it for me:

"Yes, those were good times of 'Galatea' and 'The Winter's Tale,' and so many other creations of yours. Especially do I like to linger on the

souvenirs of 'The Winter's Tale,' and its last performance at the Lyceum, when you were so fully and enthusiastically engrossed with your rendering of Shakespeare that I distinctly heard you sing while dancing down in Perdita. The house called for a speech, and it did one good to see everybody so grateful for what you had given, and I shall never forget the moment when, after a few words of farewell, you hesitated, and tried to find a support on the curtain, when a voice from the gallery was heard, saying, 'God bless you, Mary,' and immediately the hearty wish was re-echoed by the whole theatre as if with one voice. Alas! you did not keep your promise, and never returned to the London stage, and reserved only to some chosen friends the happiness of meeting you, who must always be a bright star in their past."

CHAPTER XVII

AFTER so much kindness from the public, it seems ungrateful to confess that the *practice* of my art (not the study of it) had grown, as time went on, more and more distasteful to me. To quote Fanny Kemble on the same subject: "Never" (in my case for the last three years of my public life) "have I presented myself before an audience without a feeling of reluctance, or withdrawn from their presence without thinking the excitement I had undergone unwholesome, and the personal exhibition odious." To be conscious that one's person was a target for any who paid to make it one; to live for months at a time in one groove, with uncongenial surroundings, and in an atmosphere seldom penetrated by the sun and air; and to be continually repeating the same passions and thoughts in the same words—that was the most part of my daily life, and became so like slavery to me that I resolved after one more season's work to cut myself free from




the stage fetters forever. I was then beginning the tour in England, Ireland, and Scotland that brought my career as an actress to an end in Great Britain. This was in 1888. My last appearance on the Old World side of the ocean was in Dublin, where we were joined by Mr. and Mrs. William Black, and where for a frolic we inveigled the author of "The Strange Adventures of a Phaeton" upon the mimic scene. Once before, on his native heath, Scotland, we had induced him to appear as a mute masked guest in the ballroom scene of "Romeo and Juliet." On that occasion, I remember, he went to the theatre as soon as any of the actors, to dress for his part, though his costume consisted only of a domino and mask. When the scene opened, and he was discovered among a throng of guests, he was struck by a violent attack of stage fright that nailed him to the stage, and kept him there after the others had departed—an unwilling witness of the tender glances of the Veronese lovers. Finally, Tybalt, without Shakespeare's permission, returned to the scene and led him off. In Dublin he was disguised as an ancient peasant in "The Winter's Tale," and the manner in which he strolled about conversing in his own—not Shakespeare's—lan-

guage, and ferociously waving a long staff, was more alarming even than his petrification in "Romeo and Juliet." This second effort proved to us definitely that his acting was as bad as his writing was good, and his wife and I concluded that it would be better for his reputation as an immortal not to strut the stage again.

The adieu from Ireland was, as before, uproarious. The night's journey to Queenstown was filled with surprises. After settling down to sleep the time away I was awakened at the different stations *en route* with cheers and cries of "Hurrah for the Stars and Stripes!" "Good-luck to our Mary," etc., and was then told that some of that night's kind-hearted audience were seeing us safely on our way to the sea.

In New York, Booth and Barrett were acting together during my engagement there. We constantly met, and our parties often supped together after the play. It was very amusing to see the fiery Cassius and stolid Brutus indulging in bread-and-milk after "cleaving the general ear with horrid speech." Dear Lawrence Barrett was always the life of our little suppers. A five-act tragedy and a long night's work seemed to exhilarate him, and his droll remarks and wonderful anecdotes kept us



in great spirits. Booth sat quietly listening, his large dark eyes sparkling with amusement. Occasionally he was fired to rise and act some comic incident in his own inimitable manner. What a happy party we were!—like a lot of children out of school. And they, the two bright lights of all these meetings, are now gone. “Where be their gambols now? their songs? their flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table on a roar?” The rare place they occupied in the affection of their friends, and in the heart of the public, can never again be filled. It has been said by a well-known manager that “Shakespeare spells ruin.” Observation and experience have taught me the contrary. When he is well treated, Shakespeare never fails to draw the public. The *répertoire* of Booth and Barrett consisted principally of the master’s plays, and their financial as well as artistic success was very great. At the same time, in the same city, I was playing “The Winter’s Tale” to all the houses could hold. Irving can always fill his theatre with the great bard’s plays. Salvini’s most signal triumphs in America, England, and on the Continent have been in “Othello”; and I have never seen the Théâtre Français so constantly crowded as during the run of “Hamlet.” In

spite of the recent futile attempts to prove that he did not write his own plays, and the unworthy effort so to rob him of his glory, it is clearly obvious to all who do not wish to gain notoriety by trying to fell a giant that Shakespeare is for all climes and all times.

After visiting many of the principal States, I was delighted to find myself again in quaint, charming Louisville, Kentucky. Everything goes along so quietly and lazily there that no one seems to change or grow older. Having no rehearsals, I used my first free time since I had left the city, soon after my *débüt*, to see the places I liked best. Many of my childhood's haunts were visited with our old nurse "Lou." At the Ursuline Convent, with its high walls, where music had first cast a veritable spell, and made a willing slave of me for life, most of the nuns looked much the same, though I had not seen them in nineteen years. The little window of the den where I had first resolved to go upon the stage was as bright and shining as ever; and I wondered, in passing the old house, whether some other young and hopeful creature were dreaming and toiling there as I had done so many years before. At the Presentation Academy I found the latticed summer-house (where, as a child, I had re-



acted for my companions every play seen at the Saturday matinées, instead of eating my lunch) looking just as cool and inviting as it did then. My little desk, the dunce-stool, everything seemed to have a friendly greeting for me. Mother Eulalia was still the superioress, and in looking into her kind face and finding so little change there, it seemed that the vortex I had lived in since those early years was but a restless dream, and that I must be a little child again under her gentle care. No one was changed but myself. I seemed to have lived a hundred years since leaving the old places and kindly faces, and to have suddenly come back again into their midst (unlike Rip Van Winkle) to find them as I had left them.

Many episodes, memorable to me, occurred in Louisville. Not the least pleasant was Father Boucher's acknowledgment (after disapproving of my profession for years) that my private life had not fallen under the evils which, at the beginning, he feared to be inevitable from contact with the theatre. Father Boucher was a dear old Frenchman, who had known and instructed me in matters religious since my childhood. My respect and affection for him had always been deep. When he condemned my resolution to go upon the stage

quite as bitterly as did my venerated guardian, Pater Anton, my cup of unhappiness overflowed. All my early successes were clouded by the alienation of such unique friends. My satisfaction and delight may be imagined when, after years of estrangement, Father Boucher met me with the same trust with which he had honored me as a child, and heartily gave me his blessing.

It was also at Louisville that the highly complimentary "resolutions" passed by the Senate of Kentucky, and unanimously adopted by that body, were presented to me. They were the State's crowning expression of good-will to their grateful, though unworthy, countrywoman.

There have been so many conflicting reports about my illness that season—which was only the natural result of overwork—that I am glad to be able to give an accurate account of those last nights of my stage career. The strain of living so many lives in one, added to the wear and tear of constant travel, was beginning to tell upon me. At Cincinnati I felt too weary to act, but went through the engagement there; and, to my surprise, was told by every one that my work was better than usual. At Washington (it was inauguration week, and Mr. Harrison had just



been proclaimed President) I went through the first two nights. On Ash-Wednesday the doctor thought me too tired to make the effort, and I did not appear. On Thursday, against his wishes and those of that kindest of impresarios, Henry E. Abbey, I insisted upon acting. The first scenes of "The Winter's Tale" went very smoothly. The theatre was crowded. Perdita danced apparently as gayly as ever, but after the exertion fell fainting from exhaustion, and was carried off the stage. I was taken into the dressing-room, which in a few moments was filled with people from the boxes. Recovering consciousness quickly, I begged them to clear the room. Realizing then that I would probably not be able to act any more that season, though there were many weeks yet unfinished, I resolved at any cost to complete that night's work. Hurriedly putting on some color, I passed the groups of people discussing the incident, and before the doctor or my brother were aware of my purpose, ordered the curtain to be rung up and walked quickly upon the stage. As I did so I heard a loud hum, which I was afterwards told was a great burst of applause from the audience. The pastoral scene came to an end. There was only one more act

From the Photograph by Adolph Meyer, taken, November, 1895.



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to go through. Donning the statue-like draperies of Hermione, I mounted the pedestal. My physician, formerly an officer in the army, said that he had never, even in the midst of a battle, felt so nervous as when he saw the figure of Hermione swaying on her pedestal up that long flight of stairs. Every moment there was an hour of torture to me, for I felt myself growing fainter and fainter. All my remaining strength was put into that last effort. I descended from the pedestal, and was able to speak all but the final line. This remained unuttered, and the curtain rang down on my last appearance on the stage.

The following November (1889) I became engaged to Antonio F. de Navarro, whom I had known for many years, and in June of 1890, at the little Catholic church at Hampstead, London, we were married. Many and great inducements have since been frequently offered me to act again, but—

“Il en coute trop cher pour briller dans le monde,
Combien je vais aimer ma retraite profonde;
Pour vivre heureux, vivons cachés.”

LONDON, *November*, 1895.

1. The first part of the document is a list of names and titles, followed by a list of dates and times.

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